

ARCHITECTURE MN

VOLUME 37 NUMBER 04 JUL|AUG 11 \$3.95

Architecture Minnesota is a publication of
The American Institute of Architects Minnesota
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CULTURAL SPACES

Inspired libraries, park buildings, and band shells bring people together for summer fun and learning.

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*The performing arts take flight
in a suburban town center*

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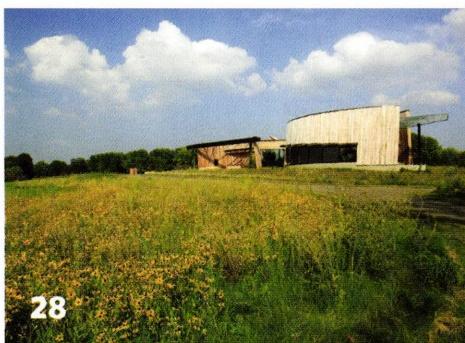
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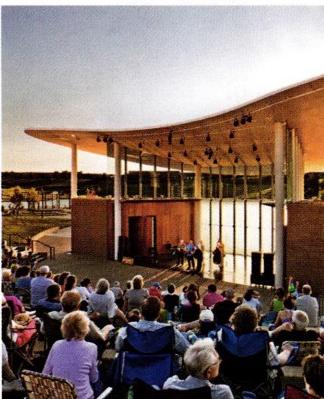
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By David Ejadi, FAIA, with
photography by George Heinrich

"On a good ride, the mind is way out ahead of the bike, relaxed and attentive, absorbing everything, including potential hazards," muses architect David Ejadi, in the wake of a motorcycle trip he and three other architecture enthusiasts took down the Mississippi River to Davenport, Iowa. "In those moments, it's almost possible to view the world as a child does, with the objects and the spaces between them becoming equal in importance. You see multiple layers of parallax, with objects appearing to move at their own speed as they pass behind or in front of one another."



ON THE COVER

Town Green Band Shell
Maple Grove, Minnesota

"A soft summer night, a gentle breeze, children laughing," recalls photographer **Paul Crosby**. "A heron lifts off the water and then fades into the silver-blue of the evening sky. OK, now cue the talent. This is where lifelong memories begin."



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screen presence >>

The old adage that good things come in threes has certainly been true for Architecture Minnesota this past year. Last fall, the Minnesota Magazine & Publishing Association's annual awards program honored us with four prizes, including two Golds, in the highly competitive General Interest category. This past winter, our first architecture video competition, called Videotect, drew 24 compelling entries, more than 20,000 online plays, and an exuberant capacity crowd at a Walker Art Center screening event introduced by Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak. And our third reason to celebrate? I'm delighted to announce that our award-winning print content and wildly creative videos now have the digital home they deserve, at the new architecturemn.com.

Two main factors spurred us to redesign the site: our desire to offer a [digital preview](#) of each new issue, and our wish to curate quality [architecture videos](#) on an ongoing basis. Thus you'll find new videos and the latest digital preview front and center on the home page.

The clips were produced to show the subjects of our articles—designed spaces and the people who create and inhabit them—in motion. The preview is exceedingly easy to navigate and includes the cover, the table of contents, this column, a department, and one of the feature stories.

Of course there's much more to read and view. In our new [blog](#), I'll highlight built-environment news and events around the state, preview upcoming *Architecture Minnesota* features, and alert you to all things [Videotect](#), now an annual competition. Not that Videotect will unfold on the blog only. Those of you participating in or following Videotect 2 this fall and winter will find everything you need on the site, including promotional videos, guidelines, and registration. In the meantime, the 2011 winners and viewers' choice finalists—all highly addictive clips—remain available for viewing.

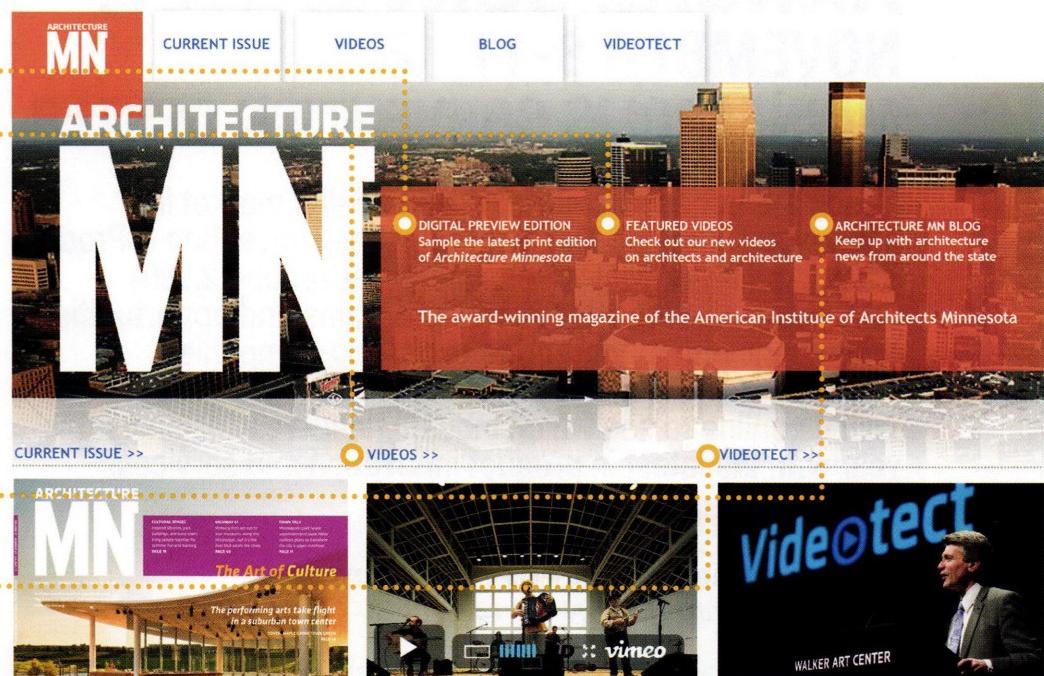
So check us out. Bookmark us. Share us. Come back weekly to see what's new. Give us some screen time, and see if we don't become one of your favorite channels.

Chris Hudson

Christopher Hudson
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Architecture Minnesota has always looked good on paper. But now we have even more to offer.

EDITOR'S NOTE



Five new cultural buildings and one that recently hit the quarter-century mark invite us to gather for the enjoyment of literature, live music, and the great outdoors.

View our new videos of evening concerts at Minneapolis' iconic Lake Harriet Band Shell and Maple Grove's new Town Green. Plus: Maple Grove's new library.

See the winning videos of our inaugural video competition, photos from the capacity-crowd screening at the Walker Art Center, and what's in store for Videotect 2.

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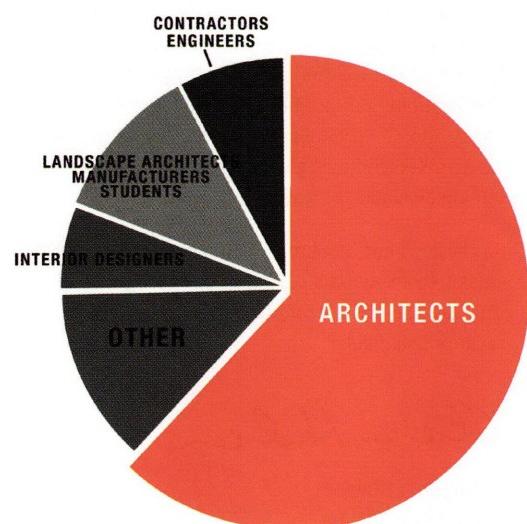
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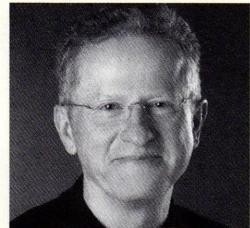
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Twin Cities photographer

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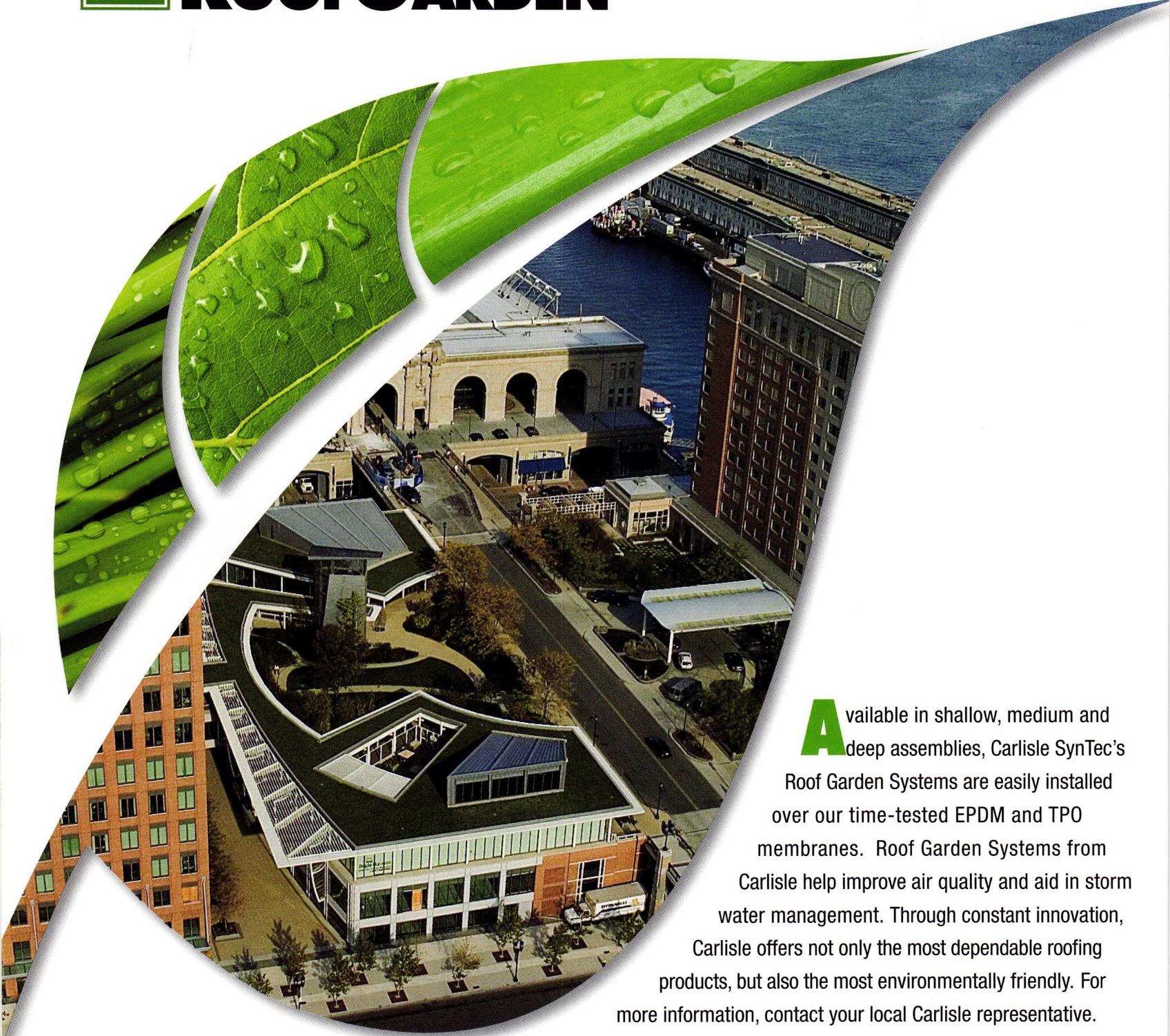
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Lawn Party

The Walker Art Center's Open Field, now in its second summer, offers the ultimate in outdoor arts recreation



Got some free time and an interest in design? Culture Crawl rounds up the latest cultural offerings from around the state.

CULTURE
CRAWL

OPEN FIELD, Museum hours, June 4–September 4, walkerart.org

Love art but don't like confining yourself to windowless galleries on a warm summer afternoon? The Walker Art Center knows just how you feel. That's why it launched Open Field, a summer-long arts-themed lawn party, in 2010. The first Open Field invited friends, families, book clubs, and other small groups to veg out on the Walker lawn or participate in communal art making at the Open Lounge, a new courtyard outside the Vineland Place entry that the Walker describes as "a combination public patio, performance plaza, classroom, and outdoor bar and grill." Back by popular demand, this year's Open Field promises to be every bit as high-spirited, with reasonably priced lunch and dinner fare, free wireless, and picnic and art materials available onsite for checkout.



PHOTOS: PAUL CROSBY

FIELD WORK Organizing Open Field wasn't as simple as opening up the museum's backyard. The Walker knew that it needed a new outdoor commons to mediate between the Vineland entrance and the sloping lawn where the Ralph Rapson-designed Guthrie recently stood. So design curator Andrew Blauvelt invited a variety of designers and artists to attend a daylong design charrette in 2009, after which the Walker commissioned participants VJAA to design the new courtyard.

"In that charrette we talked about ways of organizing the site that allowed for different zones of program," says VJAA principal Jennifer Yoos, AIA. "The idea was to unify the forecourt but also create opportunities for activities to migrate up the hill, toward the James Turrell *Sky Pesher* chamber."

VJAA's minimalist, low-cost scheme, with the forecourt transitioning to a large Cor-Ten "raft" topped by gravel,

tables, and trees, works exceedingly well. "When it opened, we were delighted to see so many people standing and sitting on the edges of the raft, using it like an object the way we intended," says Yoos. Indeed, the sight of arts revelers of all ages and backgrounds milling about the Vineland Place entry surely eases the heartache many still feel over the 2006–07 demolition of the old Guthrie. —Christopher Hudson



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PETE SIEGER

INTERVIEW BY CAMILLE LEFEVRE

Do you know Minneapolis' long history of blazing new trails? In the late 19th century, the city's newly created Board of Park Commissioners—today called the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board—oversaw the establishment of a park system designed by landscape architect Horace Cleveland; in the 1930s, thanks to an influx of Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) funding, the system was vastly expanded under the design leadership of board superintendent Theodore Wirth, resulting in the Grand Rounds Scenic Byway. Today, the park board once again embarks on a period of expansion, and it does so with a new superintendent, Jayne Miller.

Miller assumes the reins at the outset of the park board's Mississippi Riverfront Development Initiative, a public-private campaign to transform the city's mostly derelict riverfront north of the Stone Arch Bridge into thriving parkland. What will the first upper-riverfront project be, who will design it, and when will it commence? Miller met with *Architecture Minnesota* on a warm spring day at the Magney and Tusler-designed Theodore Wirth golf clubhouse to share her thoughts on the path ahead.

What was your impression of the Minneapolis parks system before you interviewed for the superintendent position, and did any part of that mental picture change when you moved here and got to work?

I was aware of the reputation of the parks system, but I hadn't visited it much prior to coming in for my interview. I did come in early for my interview and toured the system for a day. I was, and continue to be, extremely impressed with the quality and expanse of the system as well as the extent to which people use the park system amenities.

What do you see as the parks' shortcomings or missed opportunities, and how do you hope to address them?

I expect there'll be a number of opportunities for the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board (MPRB) to improve its leadership in the community. I'm focusing heavily on asking questions of the board, staff, and the community, with an eye toward improving our service delivery. In particular, I've spent a considerable amount of time reviewing our planning services.

In Town Talk, we let community leaders and other insightful people do the talking.

TOWN
TALK

TRAIL BOSS

New Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board superintendent **JAYNE MILLER** sits down with *Architecture Minnesota* for a wide-ranging conversation on her aspirations for the city and its world-class park system

Since its inception in 1883, the MPRB has shaped the landscape of Minneapolis. Its early visions provided for the Grand Rounds Scenic Byway and many other nationally recognized park features. Previous superintendents, landscape architects, and planners continued that broad and comprehensive visioning throughout much of our history. Today, the MPRB needs a strong research-based planning function that provides leadership in shaping the future of the parks system to meet the needs of the changing demographics of our city. And it's vital that our project management function yields forward-thinking park design and development that's integrated with our vision and strategic plan.

In what way does design play a role in how we appreciate, use, and care for the amenities that make up our parks system?

Design drives how people use or don't use amenities. The design of a structure determines how an individual is able to get to and use that amenity. It drives how the amenity will be maintained, the cost for building and maintaining that asset, as well as an individual's "draw" to the asset.

>> continued on page 47

For more information on the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board's efforts to transform the city's upper riverfront into a system of parks, visit minneapolisriverfrontdevelopmentinitiative.com

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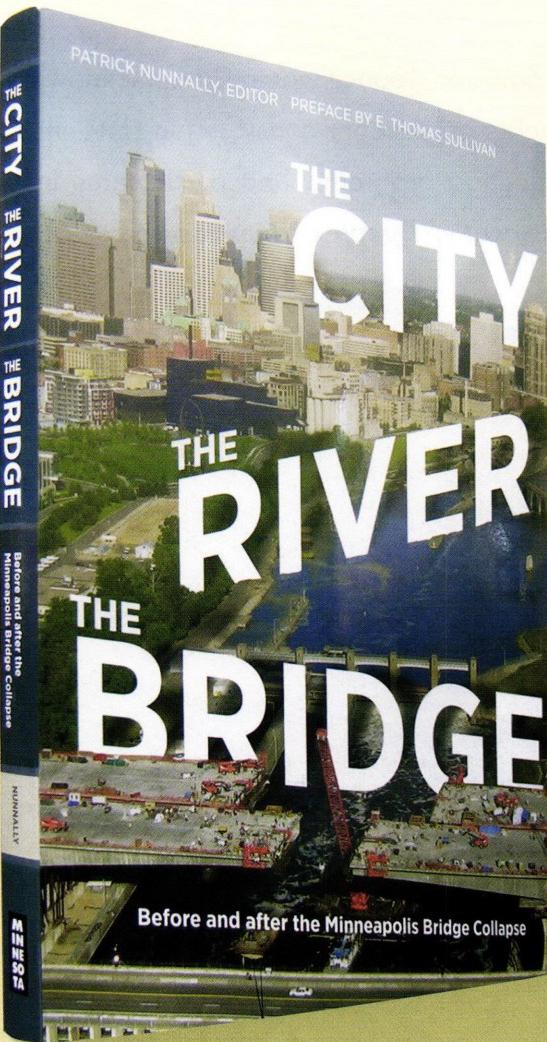


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THE CITY, THE RIVER, THE BRIDGE: BEFORE AND AFTER THE MINNEAPOLIS BRIDGE COLLAPSE

Edited by Patrick Nunnally
University of Minnesota Press, 2011

We all remember where we were, and what we were doing, when we heard that a national tragedy had unexpectedly occurred. In my lifetime, "Where were you when Kennedy was shot?" gave way to "What were you doing when the Twin Towers fell?" only to be replaced with "Where were you when the bridge collapsed?" The bridge in question, of course, was the 1,900-foot-long, eight-lane I-35W structure crossing the Mississippi River in Minneapolis. As we all so vividly remember, just after 6:00 P.M., during evening rush hour, on August 1, 2007, the bridge suddenly buckled and collapsed, sending people, cars, construction equipment, and debris into the river.

Nearly four years later, a new anthology, *The City, the River, the Bridge: Before and After the Minneapolis Bridge Collapse*, examines

The book offers a prismatic, retrospective view on the bridge: the factors leading to its collapse, lessons learned from the disaster, the impact on surrounding neighborhoods, and the policy and planning changes that have happened or are still likely to occur.

(the infamous gusset plates among them), lessons learned from the disaster and the community's response to it, the impact on surrounding neighborhoods and the river, and the policy and planning changes that have happened or are still likely to occur.

The book is an outgrowth of a 2008 University of Minnesota symposium on the bridge's collapse

In Speed Reading, we keep the reviews short and sweet. More time for you to check the books out for yourself.

**SPEED
READING**

HEARTBREAK BRIDGE A new book from the University of Minnesota Press examines the bridge collapse and its many reverberations

the tragedy from multiple perspectives, including history, engineering, architecture, hydrology, journalism, performance, and geography. Edited by "the river guy" Patrick Nunnally, who works in the Institute on the Environment at the University of Minnesota, the book offers a prismatic, retrospective view on the bridge: the factors leading to its collapse

and replacement. As such, the contributors comprise a who's-who of U thinkers. Judith Martin, director of the Urban Studies program, assesses how the bridge collapse changed the lives of people living and working in the immediate area. Thomas Fisher, Assoc. AIA, dean of the College of Design, views the bridge story as a tragic consequence of American hubris, whether financial, cultural, or related to our fracturing infrastructure.

Journalists Mark Pedelty, Heather Dorsey, and Melissa Thompson write about the Bridge Project, a series of performances that powerfully enhanced participant and audience understanding of the Mississippi River and how human activities affect ecosystems downriver. Deborah Swackhamer, of the Humphrey Institute and the Water Resources Center, eloquently reminds readers that the river provides for more than just the cities and towns along its banks; it sustains people and biodiversity throughout the country.

Our local tragedy was indeed a national one, as the book's contributors make poignantly clear. As provost E. Thomas Sullivan writes in the preface, the book "can act as a potent, meaningful, and tangible reminder of the magnitude and levels of meaning of that complex event and its implications across space and time." And so it does.

-Camille LeFevre

ON BEHALF OF OUR MEMBERS, the Midwest Masonry Promotion Council would like to acknowledge AIA Minnesota for the many opportunities provided to promote the benefits of masonry construction to Minnesota architects. The MMPC is an AIA approved provider of continuing education programs, and participates in AIA Minnesota's Convention & Products Expo. — *Craig Hinrichs AIA - MMPC Executive Director, c.hinrichs@comcast.net*

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GETTING BACK TO NATURE

Do park visitor centers need energy-consuming creature comforts and conventional exhibits to attract visitors to outdoor splendor? Architect **Thomas Meyer**, FAIA, argues for a different approach to revealing and interpreting nature.

In *Last Child in the Woods* (2005), Richard Louv argues what used to be obvious to most people—that a child's healthy physical, emotional, and spiritual development is fostered by direct interaction with nature. He cites a body of evidence relating the rise in childhood obesity, attention deficit disorder, and depression to the sedentary, overly protected, and electronics-obsessed lives of children (and their parents) today. Parents, schools, the news media, regulatory structures, and, yes, the designers of buildings and communities unconsciously send messages that, according to Louv, "associate nature with doom—while disassociating the outdoors with joy and solitude." He calls the phenomenon "nature deficit disorder."

The evolving relationship of individuals and society to the natural world is a longstanding subject of debate and anxiety, especially for Americans. Walt Whitman, Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, Wendell Berry, and many others have reflected on change and loss as human populations grew across and changed the native land. Today, we worry about our own impacts on nature, such as global warming, diminishing fresh water supplies, oil and nuclear spills, and loss of agricultural land to urban sprawl. Being part of the cause deepens the anxiety.

Creating nature centers or park visitor centers is part of society's response to these concerns—a building type whose purpose is to connect people with nature. Nature centers are a vehicle for educational, recreational, and interpretive

objectives that typically house staff offices, classrooms and meeting space, exhibit space, and amenities such as restrooms, information kiosks, and small sales areas for snacks and books. The underlying premise that a building is necessary as the destination for experiencing nature is perhaps a symptom of the problem.

Buildings are large disruptive objects that require infrastructure, including roads, parking lots, and utilities. Dirt needs to be moved and vegetation removed. Like the proverbial oversized RV in the campground with the engine running all night for the TV and air-conditioning, the building

The synergistic opportunity is to integrate the site, the building, and the exhibits. Exhibit planning should ideally begin simultaneously with the development of common ideal visitor-experience goals, interpretive themes, and design concepts that are true to the site.

Conundra attempts to sort out some of the more complex questions facing architects and planners.

CONUNDRUM

can become an imposition on nature, consuming resources and separating us from the tangible benefits that the experience of nature provides.

As with the RV, it's usually expected that even a nature center be sealed up from the outside world and operate mechanically for the comfort and convenience of the public. We no longer have the social conventions whereby individuals can be expected to reliably interact with the building components and the weather to create their own experience and to manage the building. Our society's expectation of comfort is so high—even when the destination is nature, where people might reasonably be assumed to be dressed for the weather—that none of the four nature centers that my firm, MS&R, has designed recently is without full air-conditioning.

>> continued on page 50



MS&R's design for a new Eastman Nature Center in Three Rivers Park
District calls for generous views of the surrounding hardwood forest.

GREAT BUILDINGS ARE SUSTAINABLE BY DESIGN.

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Ghent, Belgium, is the world standard for bicycle-friendly cities

POWER TO THE PEDAL



In Wayfarer, architects and other design enthusiasts share their experiences of architectural environments around the world.

WAYFARER



The ancient city of Ghent, home to a quarter-million people, survived the World Wars essentially intact, and visitors to the center of the city experience a living museum of medieval architecture. Merchant's guild houses dating from the 14th century line the River Leie as it winds like a moat around the city's ancient core.

Medieval Ghent became Europe's second-largest city, surpassed only by Paris, with a flourishing wool and fabric industry. Today the city is known for its progressive culture, tourism, university, and thriving flower export trade. It's also the world capital of competitive cycling, home to more cycling professionals than any other city and host of the annual Six Days of Ghent track-racing event. The city lays claim to cycling legend Eddy Merckx.

So it was inevitable that the city's "mobility plan," created in 1997 to relieve traffic congestion and improve conditions for pedestrians, drew on Ghent's progressive and bicycle-oriented culture. The plan established a car-free city center and gave cyclists and public transportation priority in surrounding areas. Safe, secure, permanent bicycle parking facilities were installed around the city. Some, like the one pictured here, near the Sint-Pieters railway station, are large enough to accommodate thousands of bikes—a stirring sign that the modern city remains true to its storied past.

—Photographer Paul Crosby



What Egan accomplished at the Minneapolis Central Public Library speaks volumes about commitment, versatility, and skill.



Working on a very public, greatly anticipated building project offers numerous special and challenging issues. When it is located in a city struggling with finances, there is even more scrutiny to perform flawlessly and on budget. Such was the case with the Minneapolis Central Library.

With everything from initial design to pre-construction to final construction, Egan's Mechanical and Electrical Groups brought a solid array of experience, determination and value to the project.

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THE ART OF CULTURE

IF I WERE AN ARCHITECT, I'M PRETTY SURE I'D WANT TO FOCUS ON CULTURAL PROJECTS. Sure, designing buildings for living, work, learning, or worship would be immensely rewarding, too, but public spaces that celebrate cultural pursuits are a special breed. Buildings that offer books and other channels of information, that heighten our appreciation of natural wonders, or that draw us outdoors for live performances—like the projects showcased in pairs in the following pages—tend to invite especially expressive or adventuresome design; they allow top architects to stretch our imagination, to more fully capture the spirit of a community, a place, or an idea. Add to that the fact that most of these buildings play host to a wonderfully diverse mix of people, and that those visitors are all taking part in an activity they really enjoy, and you start to understand how gratifying and challenging the design of these buildings must be. If only we approached more building projects with the same high ambitions.

—CHRISTOPHER HUDSON

Customer Se

Social Butterfly

With its bright, glassy interior, reading porch, and inviting butterfly roof, Maple Grove's new Hennepin County Library branch is a community hub for all seasons

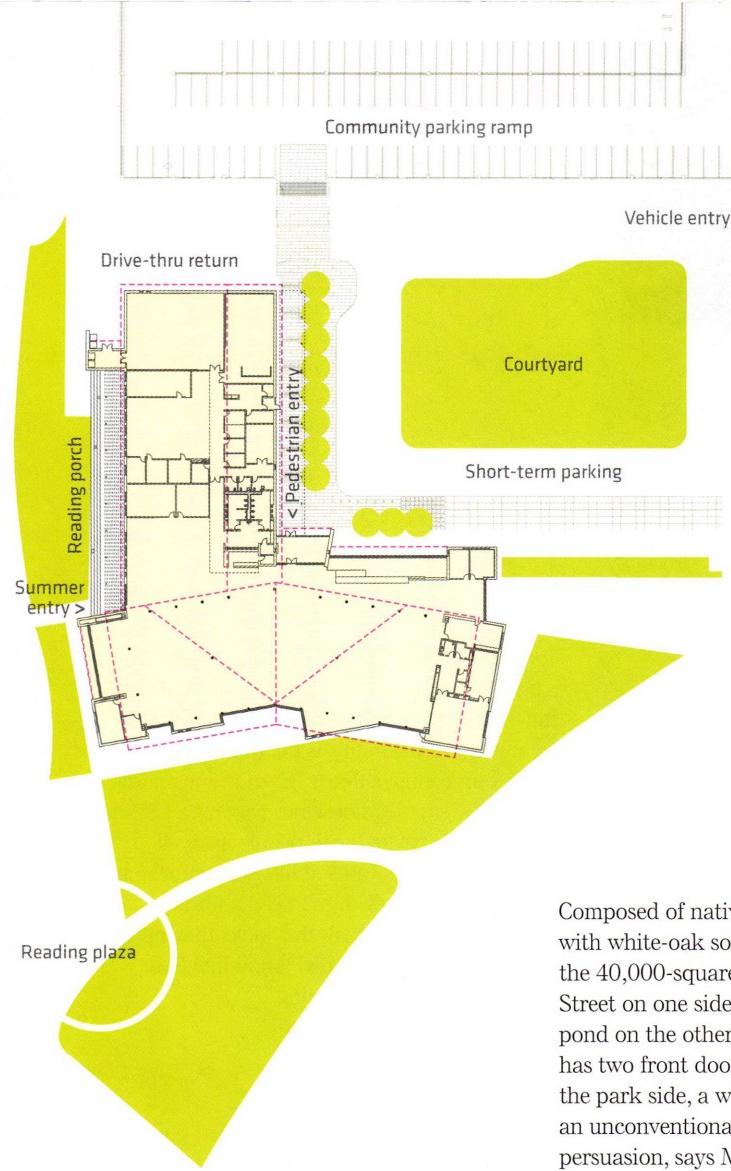
BY CAMILLE LEFEVRE



Twelve years ago, Hennepin County secured Meyer Scherer & Rockcastle (MS&R) to design a new library for Maple Grove. After parting with three library directors and three different sites, letting the project go dormant several times, and poring over multiple and ever-changing programs, the county finally gave the go-ahead in 2006.

Today, Hennepin County Library, Maple Grove, a light-filled pavilion incorporating a state-of-the-art green heating-and-cooling system and technological flexibility, is the public hub of the burgeoning suburb. "Even in the middle of the day," says lead designer Dagmara Larsen, "the library is packed with people from all backgrounds and walks of life, some of whom initially told us they didn't need a library because they can buy all the books they need. Maple Grove really needed a building like this for meeting and learning."

The new library features floor-to-ceiling glass walls that bring in natural light and reduce energy use; Minnesota limestone on the interior and exterior; and a broad vaulted ceiling.



HENNEPIN COUNTY LIBRARY MAPLE GROVE

Location:
Maple Grove, Minnesota

Client:
Hennepin County Library

Architect:
Meyer, Scherer & Rockcastle, Ltd. (MS&R)
www.msrltd.com

Principals-in-charge:
Jeffrey Scherer, FAIA
(architecture);
Traci Engel Lesneski
(interiors)

Project lead designer:
Dagmara Larsen

Energy modeling:
Karges-Faulconbridge, Inc. (KFI)

Landscape architect:
Damon Farber Associates
www.damonfarber.com

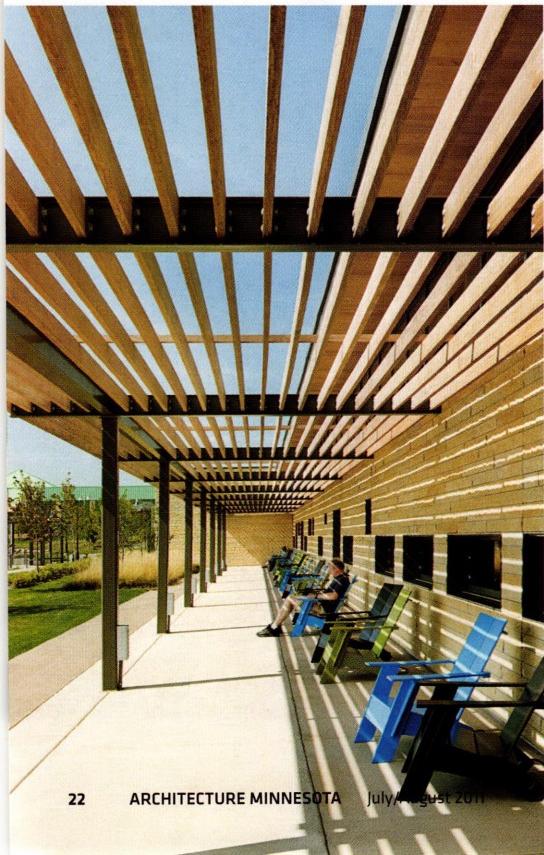
General contractor:
Adolfson & Peterson
Construction

Size:
40,000 square feet

Cost:
\$14.8 million

Completion date:
May 2010

Photographer:
Lara Swimmer



Composed of native limestone and steel, with white-oak soffits and floor-to-ceiling glass, the 40,000-square-foot library faces Main Street on one side and overlooks a park and pond on the other. Accordingly, the building has two front doors—a summer entrance on the park side, a winter entrance on the other—an unconventional move that required some persuasion, says MS&R principal Jeffrey Scherer, FAIA.

Traditionally, libraries have avoided creating two entry points to a library of this size. “But with convenient self-check, tagging, and alert systems they could have two entrances without needing extra staff,” Scherer explains. The two front doors allow the building to “transform itself according to the seasons.”

The “origami” or butterfly roof is another way the library responds to the seasons. MS&R designers investigated a series of roof forms to achieve adequate shading on the south façade during spring and summer, and to properly expose the glass walls to sun in winter. Further tweaks created the right dimensions for daylight harvesting from the north and onsite water collection from the fully planted roof.

A meeting room (top) features sculptural lighting, while a summer porch (left) overlooking an adjoining park invites reading and relaxation.





"Modern, bright, and light were the only honest ways to design this library," says lead designer Dagmara Larsen, because traditional architecture would have rung false in a suburb so new.

Those glass walls foster an outside/inside feeling by offering continual visual connection to the outdoors. An outdoor reading porch invites patrons to take their books and laptops outside, while colorful, comfortable furnishings inside are clustered in open, light-filled spaces.

"Modern, bright, and light were the only honest ways to design this library," Larsen says, because traditional architecture would have rung false in a suburb so new. Originally an oak savanna, then agricultural fields, the area was mined for gravel for the state highway system. The landscape today is full of wide-open spaces and artificial lakes.

The library service model, too, has radically changed in the past 20 years. Formerly repositories for books, and places of enlightenment through books, libraries are now more about social networking and access to technology than knowledge storage. "Today's library is a place where you come for help to find knowledge," says Larsen. "And it's a community place. There isn't a 'quiet library' model anymore."

That MS&R observed these changes during the course of the project's programming worked to everyone's benefit, says Scherer. "By the time

>> continued on page 51

Modern, bright interiors (left, above) animate the low-slung, low-impact building (below), which stretches across the site to embrace the community.





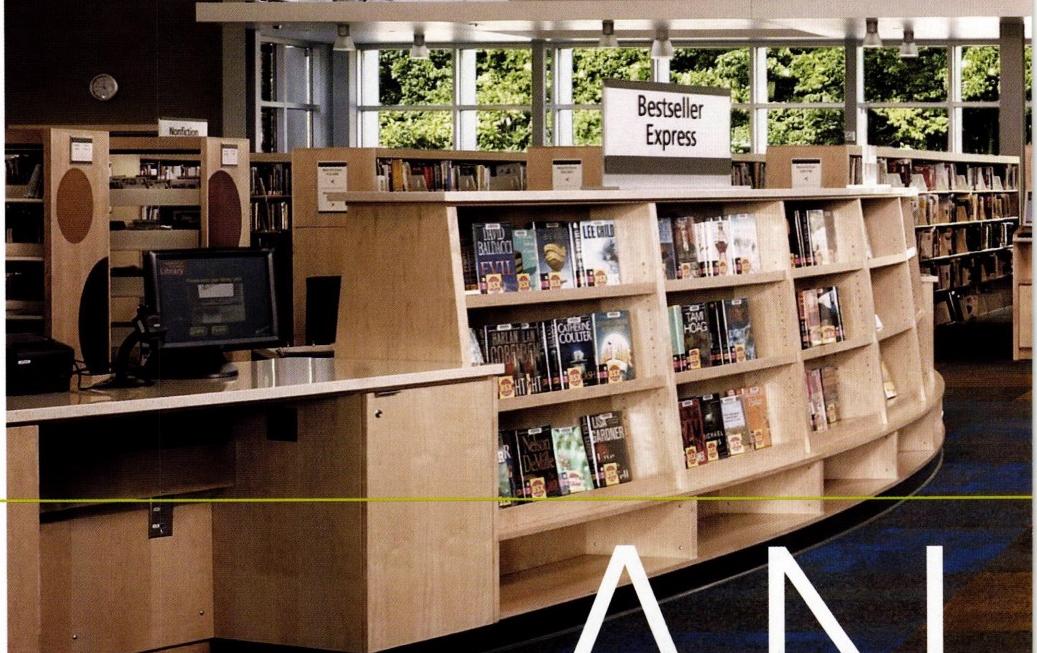
The glass walls that flood the interior with light during the day turn the library into a lantern at night.

BY BETTE HAMMEL

The entrance that architects Bentz/Thompson/Rietow (BTR) designed for the new Plymouth branch of Hennepin County Library sets the stage for a big surprise. Visitors pass through the outer glass doors into a wood-lined, soundproofed corridor, then spill into a sweeping light-filled space with unobstructed views to the latest trends in library design. It's a dramatic welcome to the city's new 30,000-square-foot community hub.

A new anchor for Plymouth's town center, the glass, metal, and brick building is twice the size of its predecessor because of the rapid growth of the community's young family population. So it's no surprise that one-third of the library is for kids, says senior librarian Trudy Hanus. From the curving central information desk inside the main entry, children head left for the Enchanted Forest, where the colorful circular tops of tall, tree-like columns hover over computer tables. Teenagers flock to their own special section: a study bar and tables with 20 computers and a glassy studio with modern furnishings. All of the library's public areas feature lively patterned blue and green carpeting.

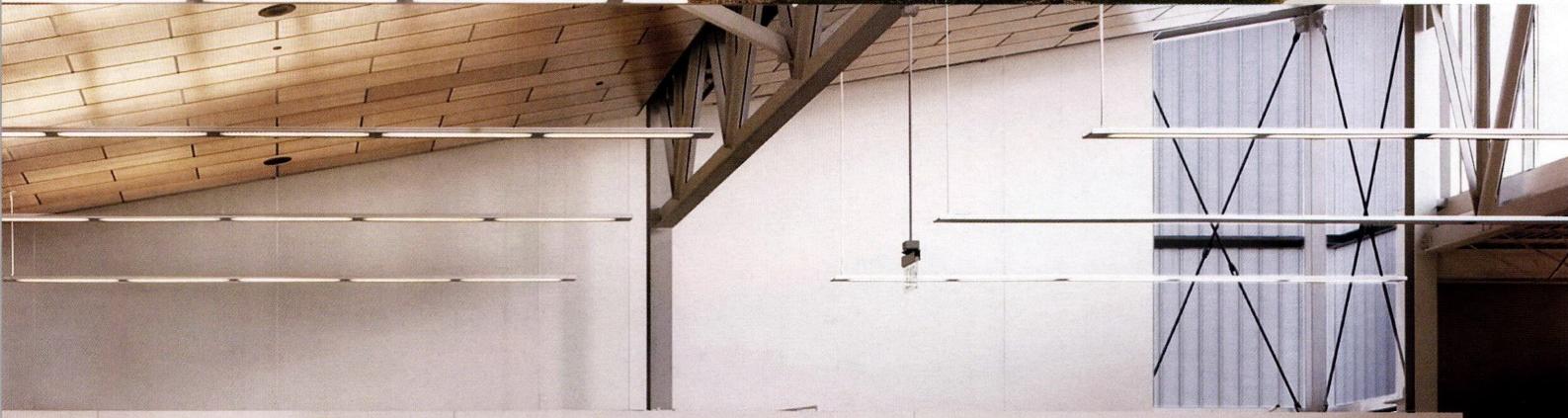
And all of them receive generous diffused daylight through north- and south-facing channel-glass clerestories, which are made possible by the library's elegantly folded roof. Sunshades on the exterior provide additional screening



AN
OPEN



The exterior is a pleasing, contemporary mix of brick, metal, and glass. The folded roof sections shown here are planted, in keeping with the project's sustainability goals.



■ PLYMOUTH GETS AN ECO-FRIENDLY, AIRY, AND FLEXIBLE NEW LIBRARY FOR ITS GROWING POPULATION

BOOK

"LIVING ROOM"

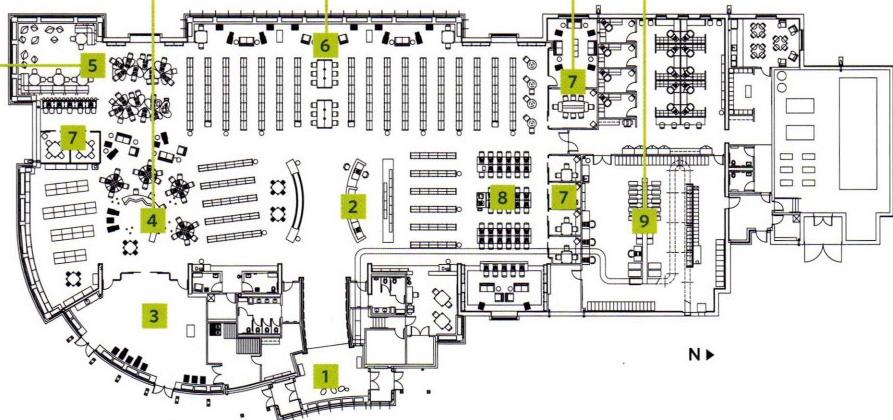


MATERIALS HANDLING



Hot spots include the "living room" (above) lining the glazed west wall of the library and the children's area (right), with its abstract canopy of trees. The automated materials handling system (top right) is cutting edge.

CHILDREN'S AREA



The library's long-span structural system allows the floor plan to be organized by purpose rather than grid-driven.

- 1 Entry lobby
- 2 Info/Service desk
- 3 Meeting room
- 4 Children's and early literacy area
- 5 Teen area
- 6 Living room
- 7 Study/Conference rooms
- 8 Public-access computers
- 9 Automated materials handling

to reduce glare and heat. Staff members have found that the plentiful natural light has greatly minimized electricity use.

Exposed metal trusses support the expansive roof, with a light-colored wood-panel ceiling softening the acoustics in the center of the library and the teen studio. Maximizing the flexibility of this open plan are four self-service checkout stations, movable partitions, and an array of meeting rooms, large and small. The community also asked for cozy spaces, and BTR responded with a long "living room" lining the windows on the wooded west side of the building.

Central to the whole design is sustainability, says BTR principal Ann Voda, AIA. "We spent a great deal of time in the design phases figuring out the right balance of strategies for this building at this location," she says. Integrated mechanical and electrical systems and raised access flooring ensure energy efficiency and optimal air quality.



STUDY ROOMS

Teenagers flock to their own special section: a study bar and tables with 20 computers and a glassy studio with modern furnishings.

with lighting controls and geothermal heating and cooling expected to make the building 40 percent more efficient than energy code requires. Three sections of the roof are planted, at the low points of which excess moisture is drained and deposited into a stormwater management pond. And the architects achieved 95 percent landfill avoidance with the demolition waste from the old library and construction waste from the new one.

In its first year of operation, the library's state-of-the-art automated materials handling system processed 1.25 million items, which translates to up to 600 books every hour. These numbers are clear evidence that area residents already view the facility as a vital place for learning, meeting, and communicating. And why wouldn't they? Their new community space ranks high among several new Hennepin County branch libraries (see page 20) for its innovations and engaging, light-filled interiors. **AMN**



TEEN STUDIO

The open, easily reconfigurable teen studio invites high school students to make the space their own.

HENNEPIN COUNTY LIBRARY, PLYMOUTH

Location:
Plymouth, Minnesota
Client:
Hennepin County Library
Architect:
Bentz/Thompson/Rietow, Inc.
www.btr-architects.com

Principal architect:
Ann Voda, AIA
Project lead designer:
Jonathan Strand, AIA
General contractor:
Jorgenson Construction Inc.

Size:
30,000 square feet
Completion date:
April 2010
Photographer:
Philip Prowse



ANDREA RUGG

Canted and curved walls create sheltered spaces inside and out at Dakota County's Schaar's Bluff Gathering Center. The floor-to-ceiling glass wall and scupper (bottom) face an oak woods and ravine to the south. The entry plaza locates the site in the Mississippi watershed.

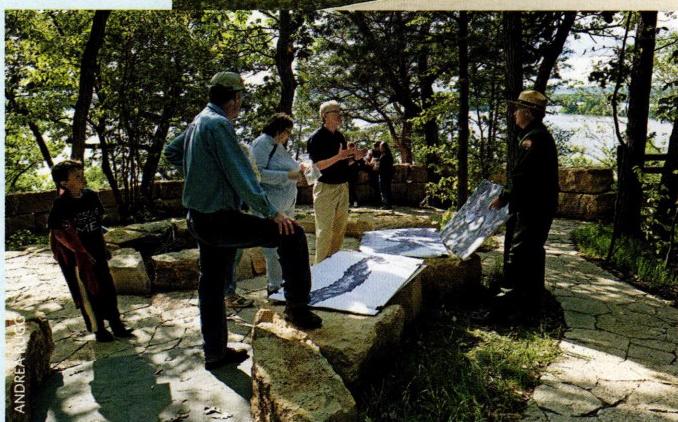
FROM THE 100-FOOT-HIGH SCHAAAR'S BLUFF IN DAKOTA COUNTY, THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER SPREADS FAR AND WIDE.

AND WIDE. The bluff is part of the county park system's 1,200-acre Spring Lake Park Reserve. Located at a broad east-west bend in the river northwest of Hastings, it offers a watery panorama punctuated by barges, bald eagles, and distant airplanes.

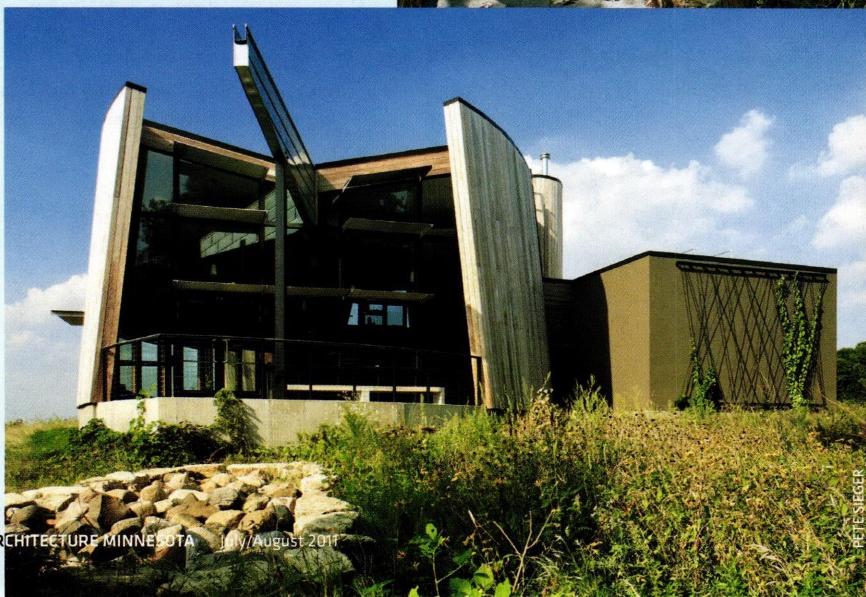
When Dakota County Parks decided to build a gathering center on the bluff, "We knew it couldn't be the same old, same old," says Bruce Blair, manager of facility development. "We had an extraordinary site. Let's have an extraordinary project and process."

Schaar's Bluff Gathering Center, designed by Meyer Scherer & Rockcastle (MS&R), fulfills the goal. Since opening in spring 2008, the 3,500-square-foot building has become a popular place for weddings, family reunions, and nature excursions. Its football shape nestled on the bluff's edge evokes a primitive encampment. Perhaps that's because the design process began in a tent.

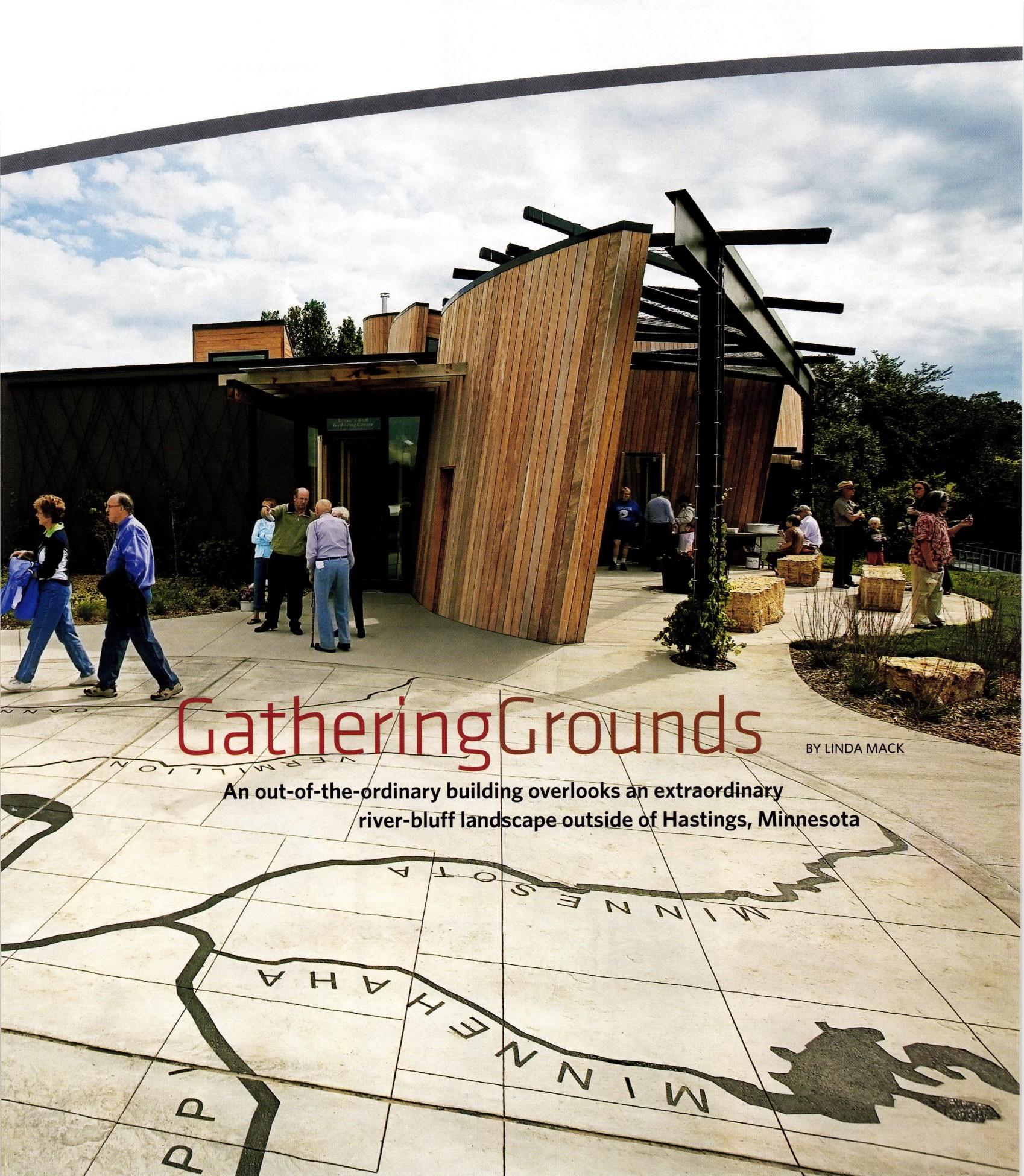
It was Blair's idea to pitch a tent on the site and invite folks to stop by and offer their input. Over the course of a June day, Dakota elders, National Park Service rangers, county park commissioners, and others stopped by. A thunderstorm rolled through. And "everyone



ANDREA RUGG



ANDREA RUGG



GatheringGrounds

BY LINDA MACK

An out-of-the-ordinary building overlooks an extraordinary river-bluff landscape outside of Hastings, Minnesota



was stretching their arms out in a big oval and talking about a gathering place," says MS&R principal-in-charge Thomas Meyer, FAIA. Adds Blair: "Words like *trailhead* and *visitor center* just didn't fit."

The long history of indigenous settlement was a major influence on the design. Pottery shards and stone tools dating back 8,000 years make the site the oldest known settlement in the state. "Something was good at this place in the world," says Blair.

The powerful landscape called for a building in sync with its place. In concert with Close Landscape Architecture+, MS&R sited the gathering center on the bluff's downward slope rather than at the highest spot. From the small parking lot, the river view commands the eye. The building beckons from the edge, its curved

and canted walls recalling a tent. A curved outdoor wall and rough-cut Mankato stone benches define a sitting place around a fire pit. An oversized scupper spills rainwater into a boulder field. The building isn't shy; its unusual shapes and angles provide intrigue.

Close Landscape Architecture+ designed an entry plaza incised with the flow of local rivers to locate Schaar's Bluff in the Mississippi watershed. In the building's vestibule, four framed displays quickly and artfully tell the story of the site's human and animal habitation. Although the building isn't staffed, the vestibule and its restrooms, drinking fountains, and vending machines are open all year. From here double doors open to the tall elliptical room that is the actual gathering place.

Square stepped windows frame the river panorama, while floor-to-ceiling glass opens

>> continued on page 53

SCHAAR'S BLUFF GATHERING CENTER

Location:
Nininger Township,
Minnesota

Client:
Dakota County
Parks Department

Architect:
Meyer, Scherer &
Rockcastle, Ltd. (MS&R)
www.msr ltd.com

Principal-in-charge:
Thomas Meyer, FAIA

Project manager:
Paul Mellblom, AIA

Project lead designer:
Brendan Sapienza

Landscape architect:
Close Landscape
Architecture+
www.closelandarch.com

General contractor:
Rochon Corporation

Size:
3,500 square feet

Cost:
\$3 million

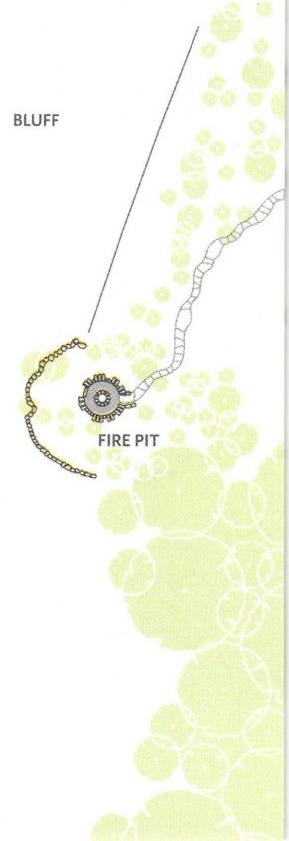
Completion date:
April 2008

MISSISSIPPI
RIVER

The football-shaped gathering space (below) has become a popular place for meetings, receptions, and parties. ("There's no power in a square," Black Elk said.) The oak walls were milled at Dakota County Park's sawmill. Displays in the vestibule (above) tell the story of the ancient site.



PETE SIEGER





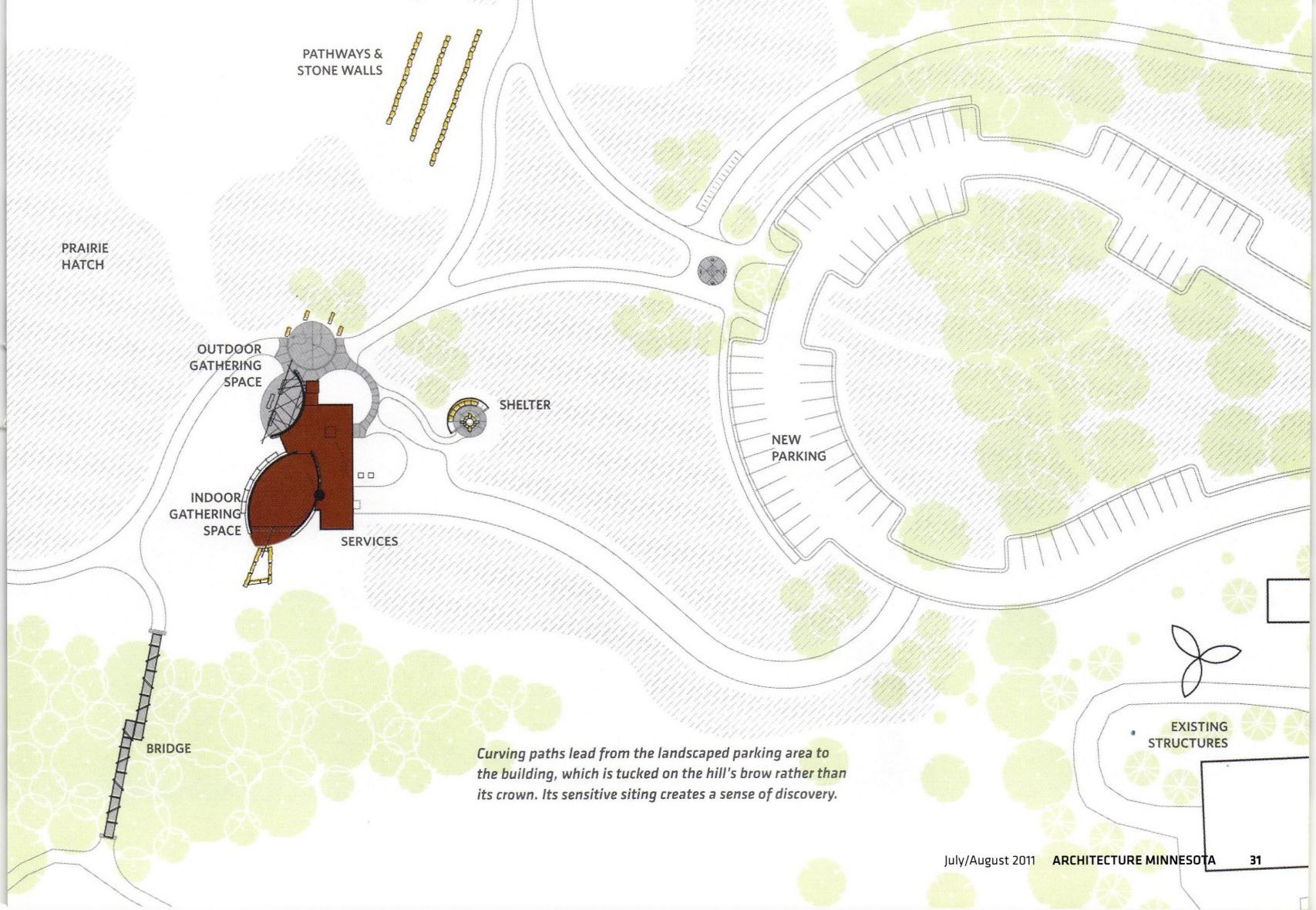
ANDREA RUGG

The gathering center frames the bluff-top view (left) rather than stealing it. A metal bridge (below) with a jog and Cor-Ten steel columns spans the ravine and leads to park trails.



PETE SIEGER

MS&R and Close Landscape Architecture+ sited the gathering center on the bluff's downward slope rather than at the highest spot. From the small parking lot, the river view commands the eye.





A park board,
an architecture firm,
and a landscape
firm seize a rare
opportunity to create
a regional park for
the arts in a first-ring
Twin Cities suburb

Green Canvas

By Amy Goetzman

A rare piece of urban wilderness in a community without a center gave the Three Rivers Park District the chance to do things right the first time around.

There aren't many second chances in urban planning. When buildings and roads replace natural spaces, right angles become the new landscape. The shape and quality of the land

is lost forever, a problem compounded when buildings are dropped into crowded communities with little regard for aesthetics or quality of life. Sometimes form follows function, end of story.

Other times, though, there's a second chance. Hidden in the first-ring suburban intersection of St. Anthony, Northeast Minneapolis, Columbia Heights, and New Brighton, 70 acres on Silver Lake lay protected as a camp owned by the Salvation Army. In 2009, it opened as the Three Rivers Park District's only urban park, with a distinctive mission to combine nature and art. So naturally it needed a spectacular visitor center.

"Three Rivers has been a client of ours for more than 15 years. But obviously this was a very rare opportunity," says Miller Dunwiddie Architecture principal John Mecum, AIA. (Miller Dunwiddie

>> continued on page 53



Inspired by the national park buildings of the American West, the Three Rivers Park District staff envisioned a modified version that would complement its Midwestern oak savanna setting. Wood harvested on site and regional stone are the building blocks of a structure rife with energy-saving design and systems.

An outdoor performance space connects the building to the surroundings and gives the community a cultural destination.



SILVERWOOD PARK VISITOR CENTER

Location:
St. Anthony, Minnesota

Principal-in-charge:
John Mecum, AIA

Client:
Three Rivers Park District

Landscape architect:
SRF Consulting Group
www.srfconsulting.com

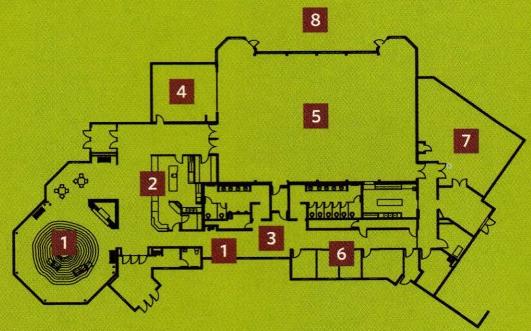
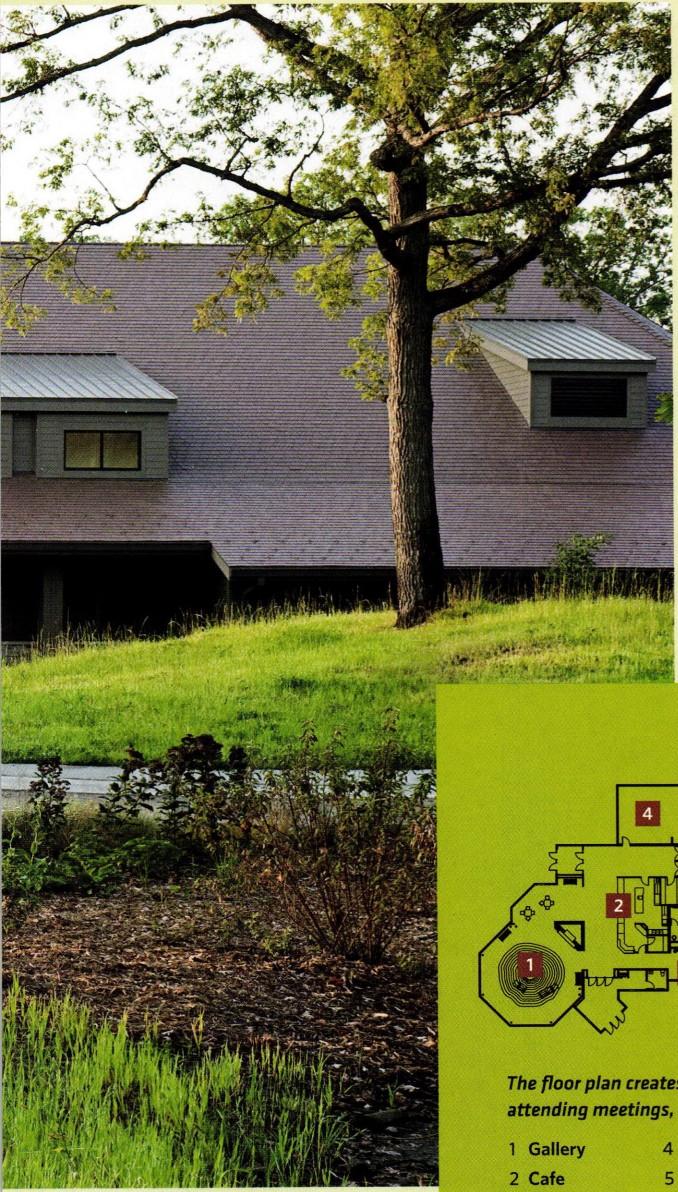
Architect:
Miller Dunwiddie
Architecture
www.millerdunwiddie.com

Size:
18,000 square feet

Cost:
\$5.4 million

Completion date:
September 2009

Photographer:
Don F. Wong



The floor plan creates memorable views for visitors attending meetings, classes, and weddings.

- | | | |
|-------------|--------------|-----------|
| 1 Gallery | 4 Classroom | 7 Storage |
| 2 Cafe | 5 Great room | 8 Patio |
| 3 Gift shop | 6 Offices | |



A stone patio (above) overlooking the lake lets visitors enjoy nature without venturing too far. In cool weather, the fireplace lounge is perhaps a greater magnet. The polished concrete floors of the gallery (top) feature a concentric circle motif that suggests tree rings.

TOWN GREEN BAND SHELL AND PAVILIONS

Location:

Maple Grove, Minnesota

Client:

City of Maple Grove

Architect:

HGA Architects and Engineers

www.hga.com

Principal-in-charge:

James Goblirsch, AIA

Project lead designer:

Eric Amel, AIA

Energy modeling:

HGA Architects and Engineers

Landscape architect:

Damon Farber Associates

www.damonfarber.com

General contractor:

RJM Construction

Size:

8 acres; 4,400
gross square feet

Construction cost:

\$5.3 million

Completion date:

June 2010

Photographer:

Paul Crosby



STANDING OVATION

By Phillip Glenn Koski, AIA

Maple Grove, Minnesota, rounds out its pedestrian-friendly civic zone with an elegant new band shell and pavilions

With the exception of little brick post offices and gable-roofed clock towers, few architectural endeavors conjure small-town civic idealism more than the outdoor band shell. For Maple Grove, a Twin Cities exurb that's spent the past three decades conceiving and building a new town center from scratch, the recent completion of a new band shell and amphitheater is the cherry on top of its civic sundae.

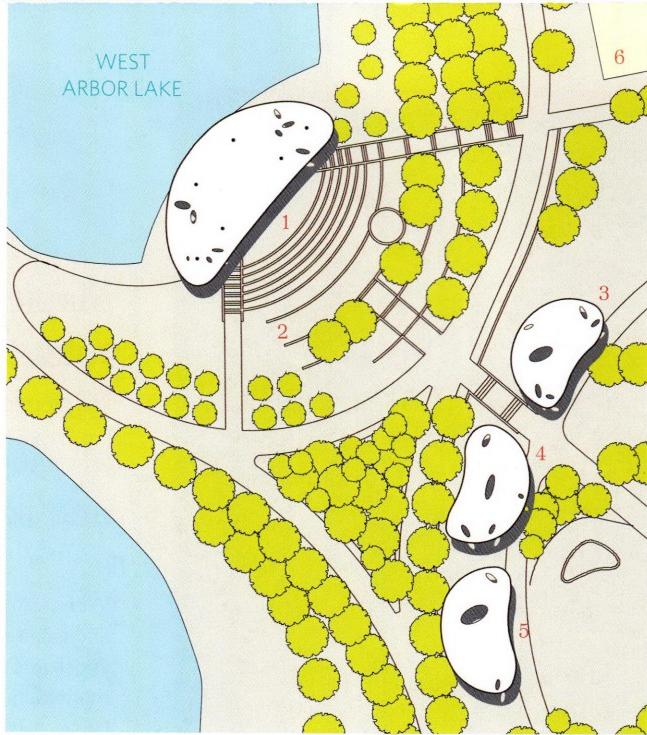
Since 1985 Maple Grove has been methodically transforming 2,000 acres of gravel and sand quarry north of I-94 into shops, parks, gleaming new office buildings, and walkable streets. The popular lifestyle center Shoppes at Arbor Lakes, which opened in 2003, and the new Main Street that winds through it anchor retail and commercial activity along the land abutting the freeway. Just to the north, a cluster of civic amenities rings a lake carved out of a former gravel pit.

The band shell's soaring roof frames the performance at the edge of a manmade lake. Perforations in the seemingly wafer-thin concrete slab create the effect of dappled sunlight beneath a forest canopy. At dusk, up-lighting lends additional drama.



TOWN GREEN BAND SHELL & PAVILIONS SITE PLAN

- 1 Band shell pavilion
- 2 Amphitheater
- 3 Concession pavilion
- 4 Resting pavilion
- 5 Meeting pavilion
- 6 County library

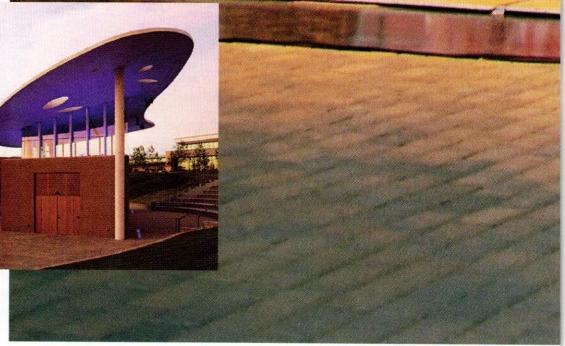
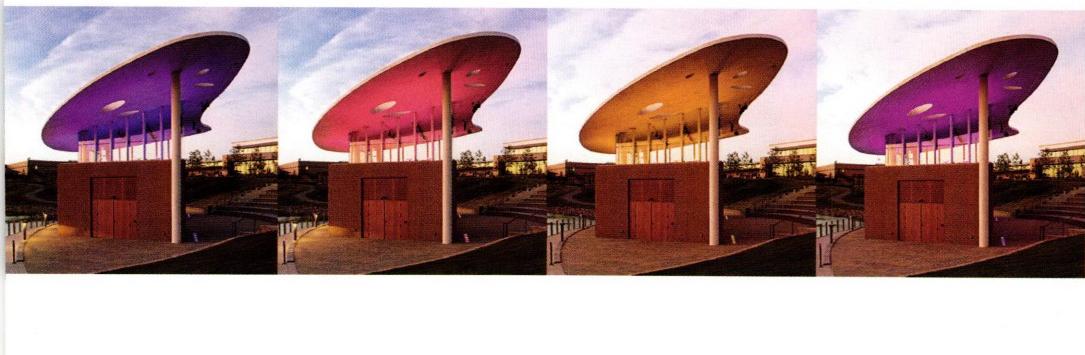
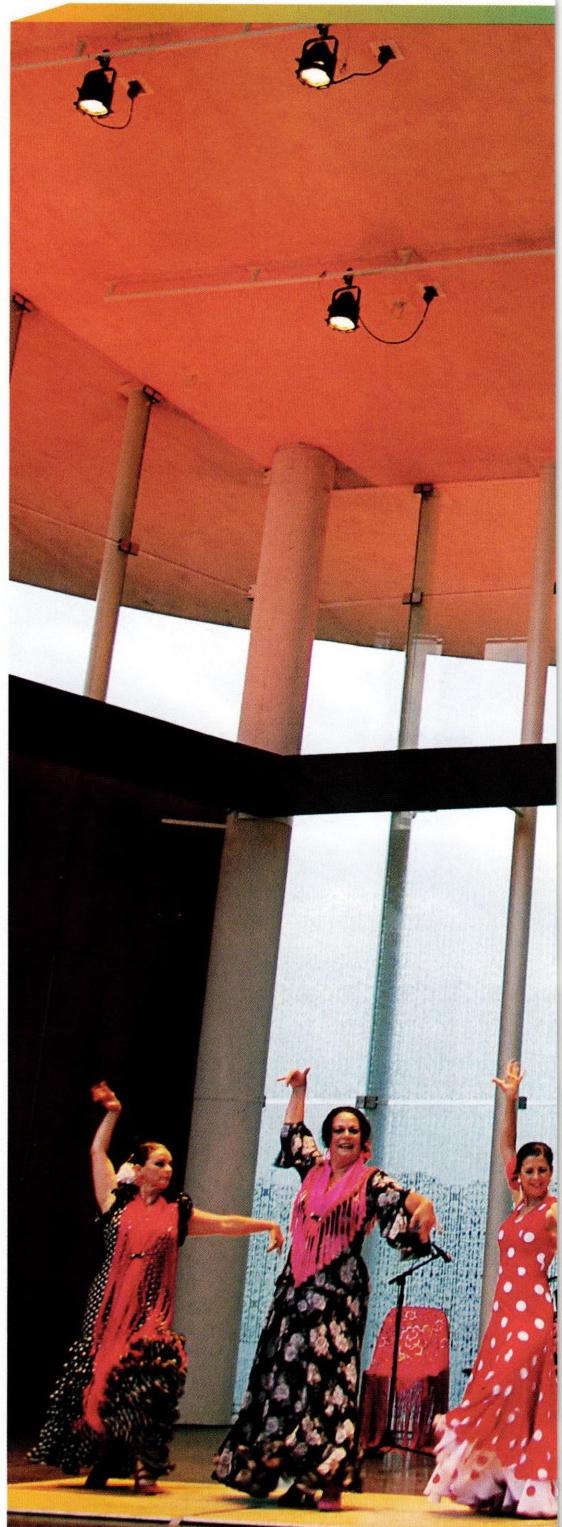


This burgeoning civic zone is home to a community and fitness center, the city's government and public safety facility, and a new library (see page 20) and parking ramp. The band shell, designed by HGA Architects and Engineers, and the adjoining landscape, by Damon Farber Associates—which together form the new Maple Grove Town Green—are its cultural crown jewels, with the landscape extending the city's system of walking and biking trails.

The area encompasses a range of architectural styles and philosophies, from the faux historicism of the Shoppes at Arbor Lakes to the glassy modernity of Great River Energy's LEED-Platinum headquarters, so the planners of the band shell had a lot of latitude in determining its look. Community input, too, was open-ended on

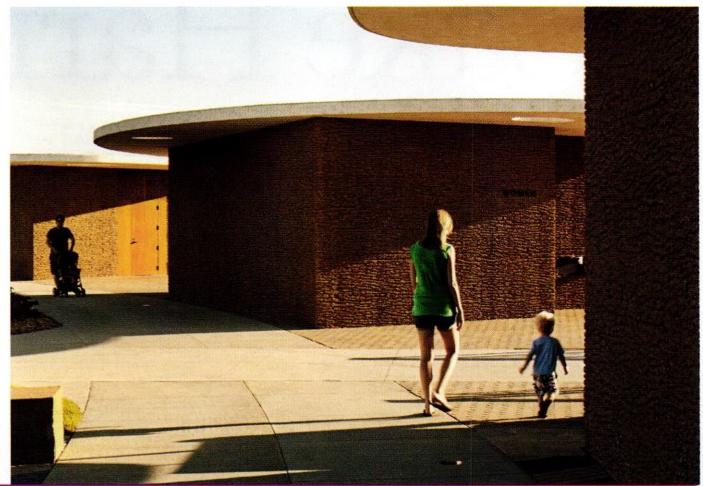
the question of style. "What the residents said they wanted most from the design was landmark architecture," says Maple Grove park planner Chuck Stifter.

Despite the variety of architectural precedents, lead designer Eric Amel, AIA, found his muse in nature and geology. He and the HGA team explored abstracted forest geometries, eventually settling on a seedpod-shaped roof of thin white concrete delicately set on six slender columns and punched through with ovoid perforations. Slightly bowed to help project sound out to the audience, the roof's simple profile belies the structural gymnastics needed to support a cantilevered, 107-foot span. Upon completion, the project won four awards for innovation and excellence in concrete construction.





Perched atop the 300-seat audience bowl, the three support pavilions are capped with junior editions of the band-shell roof.



Anda Flamenco performs during the band shell's inaugural season. The laminated glass in back is etched on both sides with an offset pattern derived from the idea of seedpods helicoptering to the ground.

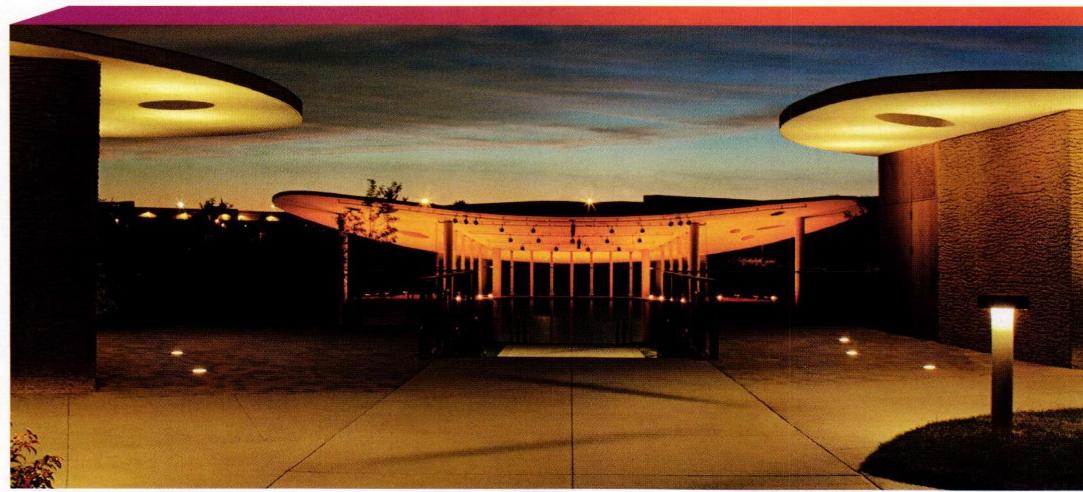
"The roof shape started with this idea of a forest canopy, and the holes were a way to create dappled light," explains Amel. "The concrete walls of the support pavilions, on the other hand, aim to evoke the stratified geology and glacial till of the area." Rammed earth also comes to mind. Perched atop the 300-seat audience bowl and capped with junior editions of the band-shell roof, the three pavilions house a meeting room, restrooms, and concessions, respectively.

After a successful first year, the band shell is ramping up for its second season. This year's slate is particularly rich and varied, with bluegrass and jazz concerts, a Mongolian circus act,

stand-up comedians, a battle of the bands, and a moonlight screening of *Jaws*. And so, for the more than 60,000 residents of Maple Grove, this hollow in the middle of a former gravel quarry continues its evolution from industrial wasteland to source of civic pride, and from a mere architectural landmark to an acclaimed cultural institution. **AMN**



VIDEO FEATURE:
View a recent Town Green band-shell performance at architecturemn.com



Lake Harriet Band Shell

TIME
TESTED

One of the most beloved symbols and amenities of the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes wins AIA Minnesota's prestigious 25-Year Award

By Bill Beyer, FAIA

PETE SIEGER



1888

Thomas Lowry builds a dance hall on the shore of Lake Harriet to increase ridership on his streetcar line.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



1891

The dance pavilion is destroyed by fire. Harry Wild Jones designs a replacement structure, which burns down in 1903.

1925

A second Jones-designed band shell is destroyed by wind. A temporary structure is erected two years later.

1985

Milo Thompson, FAIA, of Bentz/Thompson/Rietow designs the iconic band shell that still stands today.

IN THE DAYS BEFORE MODERN ELECTRONICS TRANSFORMED ENTERTAINMENT, a summer concert at the community band shell was as good as entertainment got. Those of us who grew up in the 1940s and 1950s recall that lost culture with a trace of nostalgia.

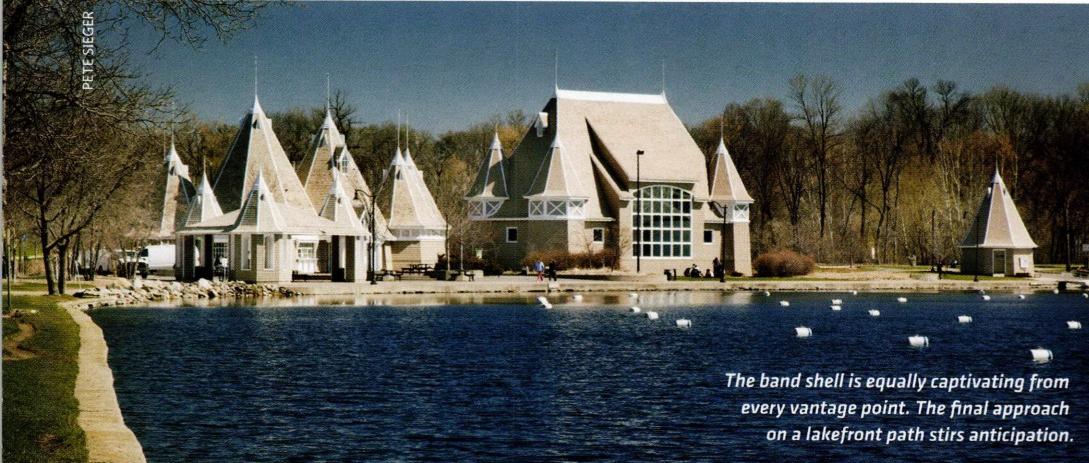
Minneapolis' Lake Harriet became an entertainment destination in 1888 when Thomas Lowry built a dance pavilion designed to lure city dwellers to bucolic pleasures on his streetcar line. The dance hall was destroyed by fire only three years later; two successors on the site, both designed by Harry Wild Jones, succumbed to fire (1903) and wind (1925), respectively.

In 1927, a plain, "temporary" structure replaced the blowdown, surviving until 1985, when Bentz/Thompson/Rietow designed the current band shell. Milo Thompson, FAIA, worked extensively with the community, taking cues from Jones' surviving Shingle Style public restroom buildings, and from the unbuilt spires of his 1891 design. The resulting blend of romantic turret, eyebrow truss, and modern glass back wall kicked off a new century of lakeside fun. In 2004, a team of citizens rescued the band shell from maintenance neglect, raising funds and organizing volunteers to repair and repaint the deteriorating wood shake exterior.

In a setting that celebrates the City of Lakes' natural heritage, the pure joy of making and listening to live music is driven home by the band shell's nostalgic architecture. The blast from the past is made complete with a ride on one of Tom Lowry's restored streetcars, the original economic spark for lakefront entertainment.

The Minneapolis public park system is a world landmark. Lake Harriet is a jewel, as beautiful as urban living gets. And its band shell has become an emblem of urban respite. In this time of seemingly endless national and world catastrophe, a gentle escape to a romanticized past via sparkling water, live music, and iconic architecture can truly soothe a troubled soul. **AMN**

PETER SIEGER



In a setting that celebrates the City of Lakes' natural heritage, the pure joy of making and listening to live music is driven home by the band shell's nostalgic architecture.



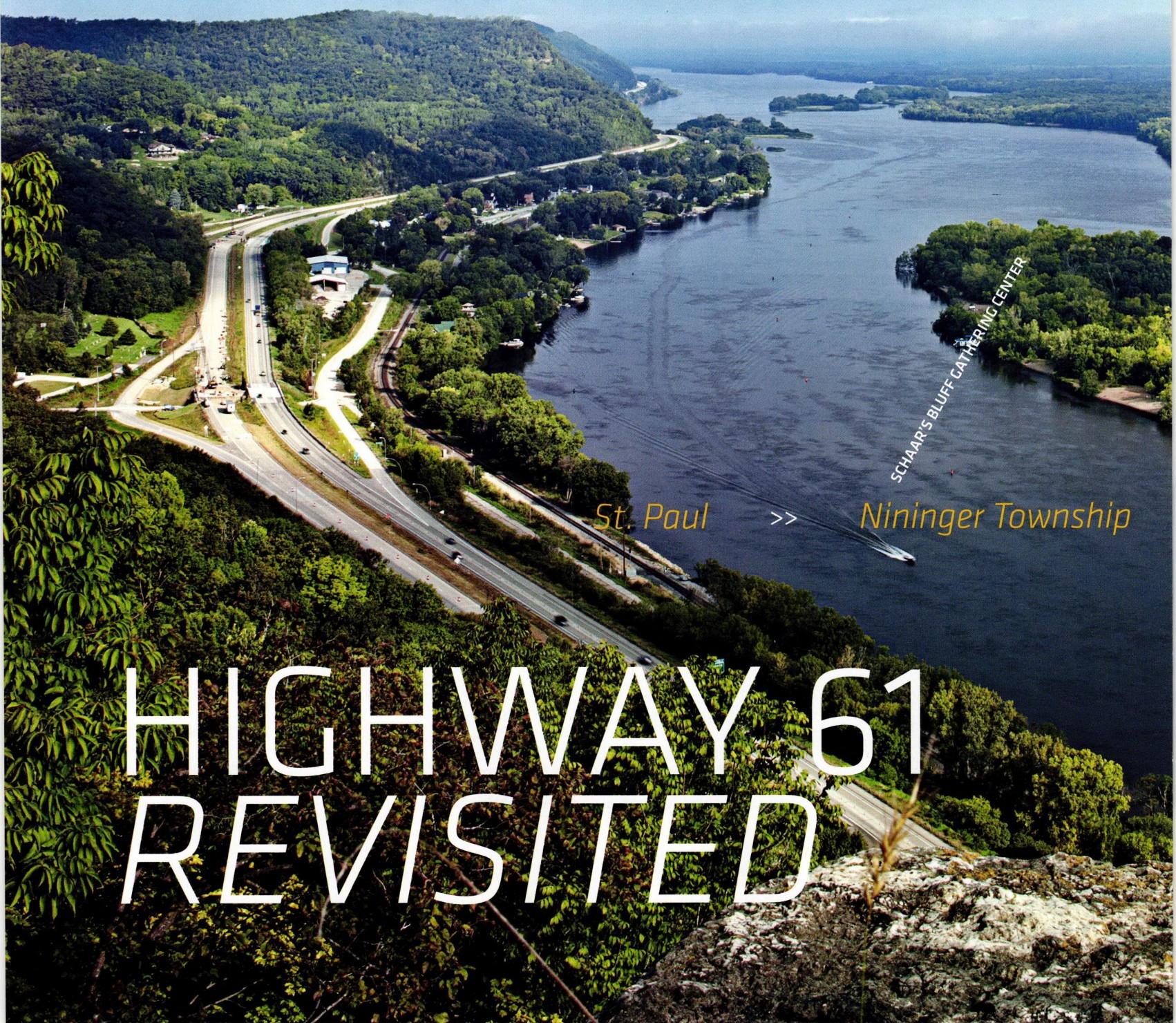
VIDEO FEATURE:
View the Lake Harriet Band Shell
in action at architecturemn.com



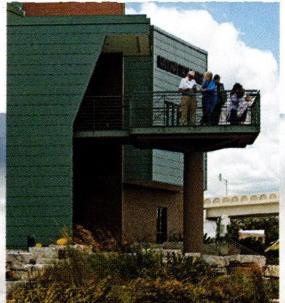
FOR A SMALL GROUP OF ARCHITECTURE ENTHUSIASTS, A MOTORCYCLE TOUR ALONG THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER FROM ST. PAUL TO DAVENPORT, IOWA, YIELDS STRIKING PHOTOS OF ELEGANT CULTURAL BUILDINGS ALONG THE WAY.

BUT IT'S THE RIVER ITSELF THAT LEAVES THE DEEPEST IMPRESSION.

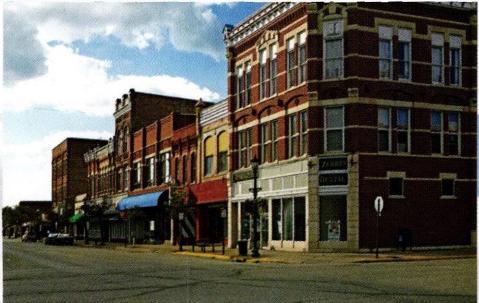
BY DAVID EIJADI, FAIA, WITH PHOTOGRAPHY BY GEORGE HEINRICH







National Eagle Center,
Wabasha, by LHB



Downtown Winona



Winona County History Center,
addition by HGA



At the first stop, George let us know that photography was not only going to take time but that it had to be captured at the right moment. Nature sets the time when the light is right for showcasing the river and the things we build alongside it. Of course, it didn't take long for us to realize that the real attractions along our route were the sights, sounds, and smells all around us. The longer we wound along the majestic Mississippi, the smaller the architecture seemed to us.

We approached each cultural center from the small crooked roads that grew up with the river towns and farming communities. The high, wide, or narrow vistas along these roads are more intense on a motorcycle than from inside a car. A person on a motorcycle is more a part of everything. The senses are more engaged; eyes move faster, and thoughts quicken. On a good ride, the mind is way out ahead of the bike, relaxed and attentive, absorbing everything, including potential hazards. In those moments, it's almost possible to view the world as a child does, with the objects and the spaces between them becoming equal in importance. You see multiple layers of parallax, with objects appearing to move at their own speed as they pass behind or in front of one another.

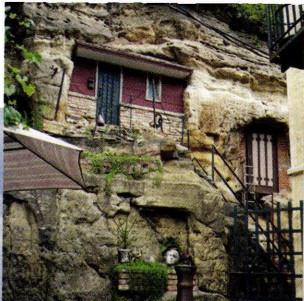


*Merchants National Bank, Winona,
by Purcell, Feick and Elmslie*



>> *La Crosse* >> *Brownsville* >> *Harpers Ferry* >>

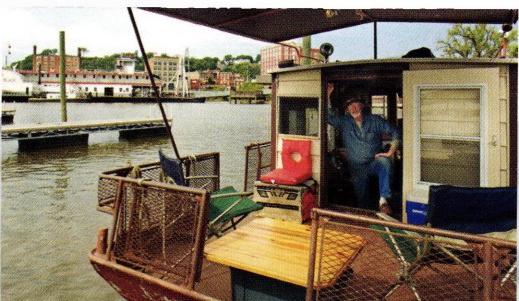
George let us know that photography was not only going to take time but that it had to be captured at the right moment. Nature sets the time when the light is right for showcasing the river and the things we build alongside it. **GROUND OF THE MINNESOTA MARITIME ART MUSEUM, WINONA**



Bluff house, McGregor, Iowa



Dubuque riverfront



Houseboat on Dubuque riverfront

We approached each cultural center from the small crooked roads that grew up with the river towns and farming communities. The high, wide, or narrow vistas along these roads are more intense on a motorcycle than from inside a car. **GREAT RIVER ROAD, NORTHWEST OF DUBUQUE**





Dubuque Museum of Art,
by HGA



Figge Art Museum, Davenport,
by David Chipperfield

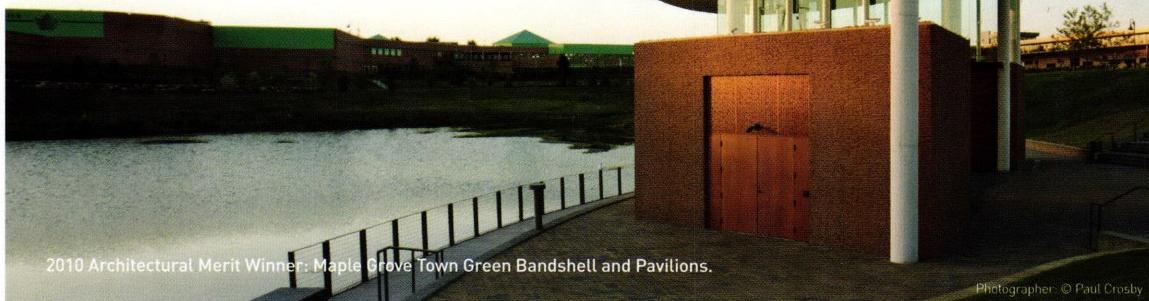


Unexpected juxtapositions occur—not just in physical space but in thought as well. On our way to see “serious” architecture, we passed through the edges and centers of towns that contained the works of many minds and skilled hands. In one brief moment, I thought I saw evidence of building evolution: Small metal-sided houseboats were tied along the riverbank just below a road where identical metal living enclosures sat on wheels. I thought, “from water to land.”

Each planned destination was still a prize, a truffle along the river and a welcome stop. Some of the museums were memorable for their fine architecture, others for what their collections say about our civilization. But all of them remain smaller in our memory than the river that brought us there. AMN

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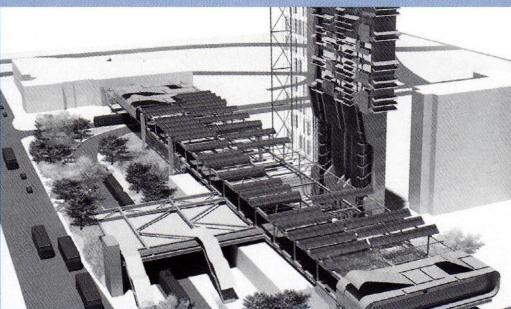
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Town Talk

<< continued from page 11

This past winter, the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board and the Minneapolis Parks Foundation sponsored the Minneapolis Riverfront Design Competition (MRDC) to catalyze a new vision for the 5.5 miles of neglected riverfront north of the Stone Arch Bridge. The winner—the team of Tom Leader Studio and Kennedy & Violich Architecture—will design the first upper-riverfront project. How soon will that project commence, and what will the process be?

With the MRDC phase completed, the project morphs into the Mississippi Riverfront Development Initiative (MRDI). During this phase, which started in April, the concept plan presented by TLS/KVA will be refined and developed into plans for a real project or projects. TLS/KVA will work closely with the community and public agencies as the plans and projects are refined. In particular, TLS/KVA, with the MPRB, will work with the City of Minneapolis to ensure that the framework and resulting projects are in sync with the Above the Falls Plan. The work of the city and its technical advisory committee for the Above the Falls Plan will be integrated into TLS/KVA's work.

I really encourage people to go to the MRDI website [see URL on page 11], learn what's happening, and become involved. During the first phase of project definition, TLS/KVA will be coordinating the elements of the overall project and educating the steering, advisory, and technical committees and the community on its concept plan. TLS/KVA in turn will gather feedback from these committees and the community.

Next, TLS/KVA will present a draft framework and a site-and-systems approach to the committees and community during the summer months in 2011. Input gathered at these meetings will help shape a final framework, phasing plan, and site-and-systems approach, all of which will be presented to the MPRB in late August or early September 2011.

What kind of new thinking about design do you hope the first upper-riverfront project, when completed, will introduce to users of that portion of the river?

This project has already sparked new thinking and new partnerships. More than 100 public and private entities, including the City of Minneapolis, Hennepin and Anoka counties, the Native American

>> continued on page 48

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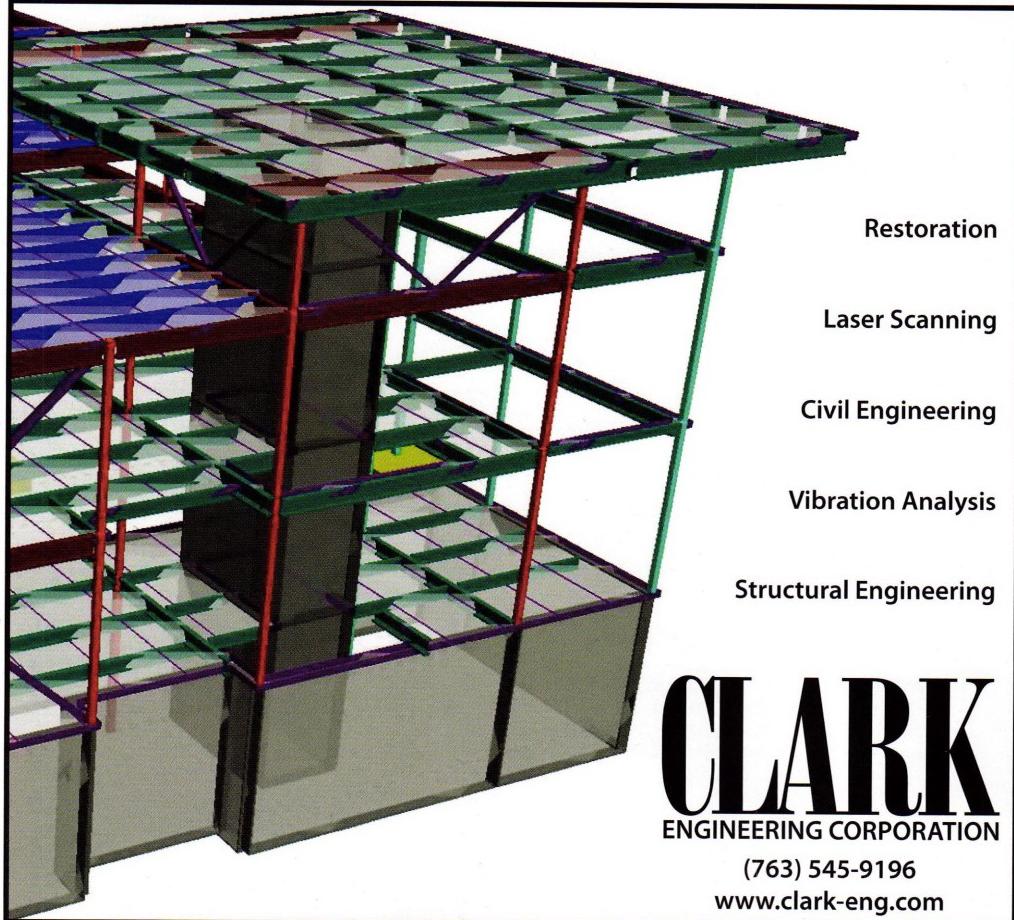
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Town Talk

<< continued from page 47

community, the Minneapolis Parks Foundation, Graco, and the Guthrie Theater, are working together to revitalize this portion of the Mississippi River. It's this type of collective work and energy that generates new design ideas and new ways of making things happen.

What other design innovations or enhancements are you hoping to introduce to the system?

I want the parks system to be more sustainable, both financially and environmentally. Our community is rich in people who care passionately about the city and the parks system, and we have wonderful natural resources that are worth preserving. That passion can be channeled to improve the sustainability of our parks and landscapes. For example, we're adding native plantings in our Chain of Lakes region this summer to provide for more natural stormwater management practices, which will also translate to less mowing, reduced use of fossil fuels, and so on.

How do you plan on implementing significant changes when the economy is still in a slump?

I faced significant economic challenges in my previous position as the Community Services Area Administrator in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Over the past decade, 50 percent of all job losses in the U.S. were in Michigan alone. While Ann Arbor is doing well relative to the rest of the state, it's still been affected by the downturn. We restructured the city organization, creating more cross-functional work groups; we evaluated the work we did, eliminating gaps in and duplications of services; we defined staff positions more broadly, streamlined our work processes, and improved service delivery. We did this by engaging our employees in creating change. I believe we have opportunities to do the same here in Minneapolis.

How do you plan on using the parks this summer? Biking, hiking, picnicking?

I joined a broomball team this winter and had a great time being outside in the cold meeting new people. My family went cross-country skiing and snowboarding at Wirth Winter Recreation Area. Cycling is my passion, and a great way to explore the system. I expect I'll go sailing and kayaking, take in concerts, and picnic in the parks. Every time I recreate in our parks system, I feel so honored to be leading it into the future. **AMN**

Photograph by Susan Gilmore



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Conundra

<< continued from page 15

For each one, we explored the idea of zoning the building so that the full-time staff would have air-conditioned office space, but transient-use spaces, such as exhibit space or classrooms where a visitor might spend an hour, would not. In each case, this concept was not seen as acceptable for a public building. If the windows were open, who would be responsible to secure them? Some people would stay away in some weather conditions. Sophisticated mechanical control systems that otherwise save energy would be confused. As Louv points out, this kind of predicament is not the fault of uncaring or untalented people. Rather, it's a manifestation of the society we have become.

Nature-center exhibits are often another missed opportunity. Intended to be a central vehicle for education and engagement, exhibits are often a random assortment of nature posters, dusty taxidermy, and other odds and ends that are either not specific to the particular site or geared to so wide an audience as to be interesting to no one. With significant resources invested in the building, staff, and operations, exhibits seem an afterthought or have a gaudy aesthetic at odds with their content and the building. Often, the design of the building and the design of the exhibits are done in isolation, resulting in little relationship between the two. The synergistic opportunity is to integrate the site, the building, and the exhibits. Exhibit planning should ideally begin simultaneously with the development of common ideal visitor-experience goals, interpretive themes, and design concepts that are true to the site.

Nature centers have an opportunity to reveal and engage nature, encouraging people to keep moving through the building and into the site—and not back out to the parking lot. For example, the senses can be engaged with sustainable strategies that heighten awareness of nature without becoming self-conscious gimmicks. Water processes (for example, its flows, treatment, absorption, and evaporation) can be made more apparent by featuring or creating visible roof drainage, rain gardens, streams, ponds, and wetlands. Water can be harvested for animals, flushing, and irrigation of plant life. The sun's power can be revealed in sunny and shady indoor and outdoor places.

Overhangs and thermal mass can quietly manage the sun's processes. Natural ventilation

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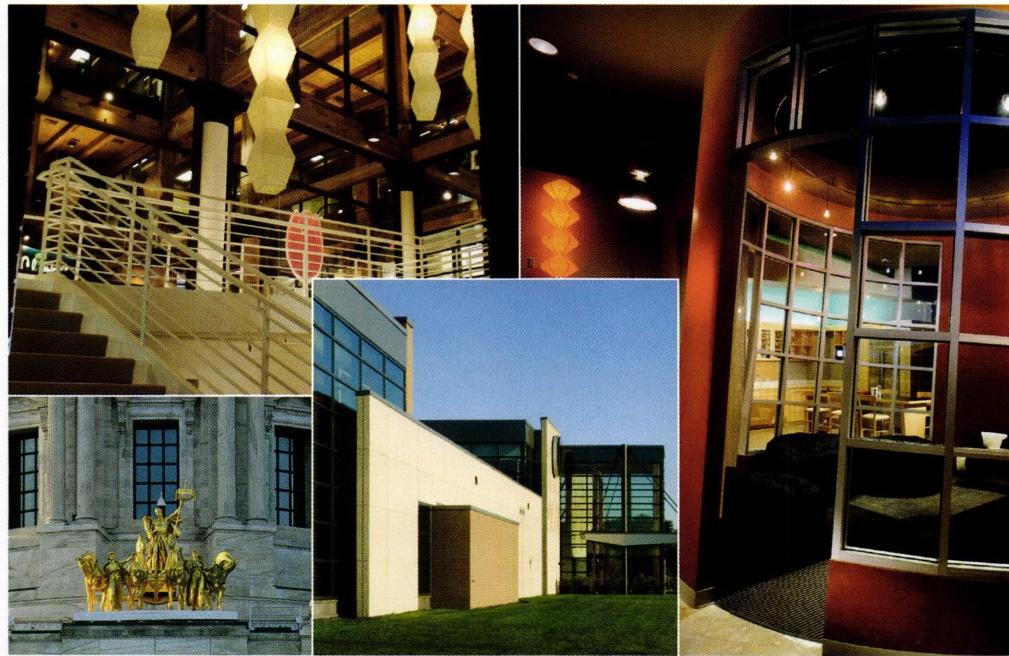
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Conundra

<< continued from page 50

and porches, decks, and balconies offer the smells and feel of the air. The building can orchestrate people's movements by putting them in memorable places outdoors and revealing distinctive views. Trails and outdoor spaces get people's feet on the earth, while geothermal wells underneath heat and cool the building. Through these experiences, the building takes on meaning by association and interaction with that which has innate and timeless authenticity—the natural systems and setting. And, conversely, nature is revealed through the foil and frame of the building.

The overarching principle of nature-center design is to be respectful of nature, to interact with it on its own terms to minimize the environmental impacts both visually and in terms of resource and energy consumption. Nature centers have an obligation to touch the earth lightly and become gracefully and unself-consciously part of the larger order of things, while inviting intimate engagement with the inherent qualities of a particular place on the earth. **AMN**



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Social Butterfly

<< continued from page 23

we got going on the project, the original program was out of date. So we talked with our client about what might change in another 10 years. That helped us convince them of the need for flexibility to accommodate ongoing evolutions in technology."

The project was also designed to B3 (Buildings, Benchmarks & Beyond: The State of Minnesota Sustainable Building Guidelines) standards. The library exceeds the state's energy code by more than 40 percent through daylight harvesting and use of renewable energy sources. An onsite lake, for example, provides hydrothermal heat and cooling. Conditioned air is circulated by an efficient under-floor distribution system. Light fixtures dim or brighten as natural light builds or wanes, and low- to no-VOC paints, sealants, and glues were used throughout the interior.

"We created an outdoor pavilion so the building doesn't get in the way of enjoying self-enlightenment," says Scherer. "It's a well-crafted building that connects residents to information, the outdoors, and the larger community." **AMN**

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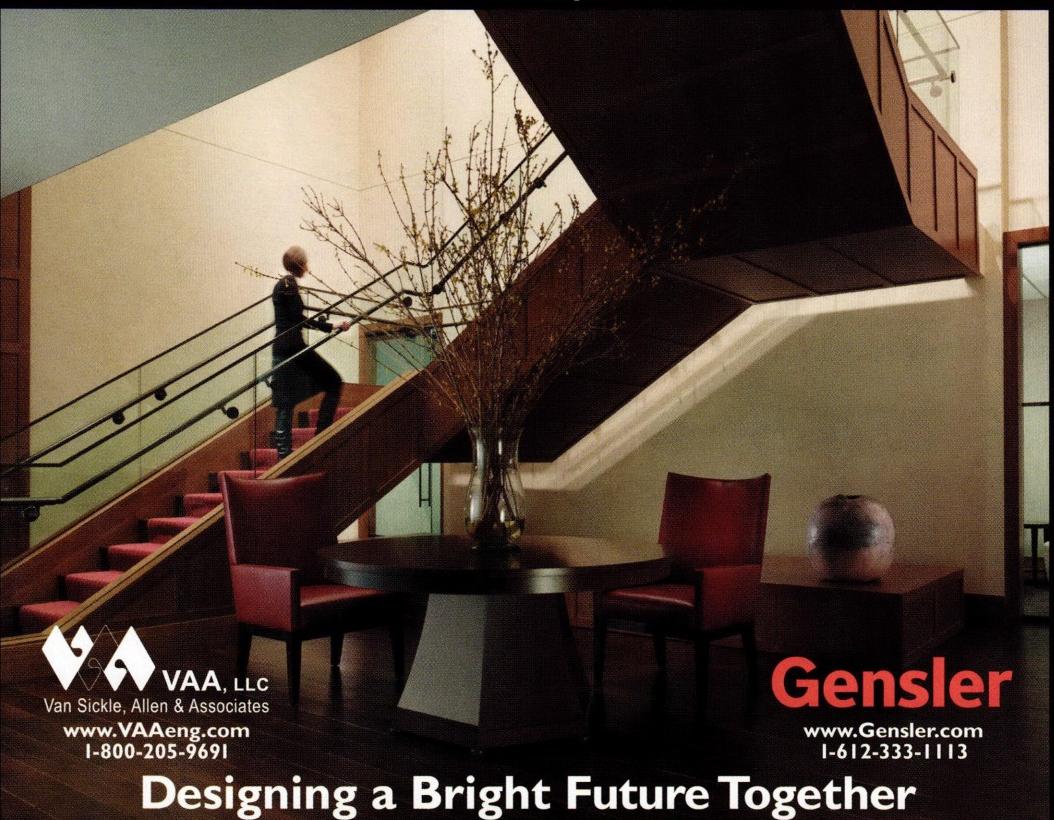
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Gathering Grounds

<< continued from page 30

to the south-facing view of an oak woods and a ravine. Canted-in walls of recycled oak milled in the park system's own sawmill encircle the space. A wood-burning stove and galley kitchen domesticate it. Blair says it seats 75 comfortably. Last year it was rented 92 times, 29 of those for weddings.

The building sits lightly on the land in operation as well as architecture. A small wind turbine provides electricity. An efficient air-to-air heat exchanger provides supplemental heating and cooling. Rainwater gathered on the roof flushes the toilets—a first for a Minnesota public building. Operable windows provide natural ventilation. The principles of permaculture, where plants are useful as well as beautiful, inspired the landscaping. Prairie grasses soften the building's edges, and strawberries, asparagus, and bittersweet and grape vines invite nibbling.

"People lived here for thousands of years because it met their needs," says Blair. "We wanted to continue that history." Perhaps that's the brilliance of Schaar's Bluff Gathering Center: While totally modern in materials and design, it has an ancient feel. While it soars, it's grounded in place. **AMN**

Green Canvas

<< continued from page 32

clearly knows its way around a tree and bench: It's also worked with Minnesota's Department of Natural Resources and the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board.) The visitor center is the heart of the park, but the firm worked with SRF Consulting Group to integrate an outdoor amphitheater, a sweeping veranda overlooking the lake, and a network of trails radiating out from it. "We teamed with landscape firm SRF, understanding that the building needed to be uniquely connected to the site," Mecum explains.

The firm had another close partner. "The Three Rivers board and staff cared very deeply about this building and had a lot of ideas and goals," says Mecum. The building needed to provide indoor and outdoor opportunities to display, teach, and create art, and it also had to demonstrate best practices in environmentally friendly design. And it needed to inspire.

>> continued on page 54



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Green Canvas

<< continued from page 53

"We actually didn't design the building to look good; we designed it to be sustainable, with a directive to use wood, stone, and glass to suit the intention and the site, and with a goal to meet [the State of Minnesota's] B3 sustainability benchmarks," says Michael Horn, Three Rivers Park District's senior manager of landscape architecture. "The fact that it does look so good is purely a byproduct of good design." He says visitor numbers in 2010 exceeded 200,000, well beyond the park district's expectations.

Other Three Rivers visitor centers seem to recede into nature by design: quiet, functional, almost in architectural camouflage. This time, the park board came to meetings with images of the great historic lodges of the West. "We talked about those national park lodges quite a bit, and ways to evoke that kind of imagery," says Miller Dunwiddie's Joel Stromgren, AIA. "A log visitor center would be out of character in an urban setting, but they still wanted to have that lodge feel, representing the environment with artistic expression.

"Because this park is so unique, containing one of the largest remaining stands of white oaks in the whole metro area, they wanted guests coming to the building to have an Up North experience," Stromgren continues. With that in mind, Miller Dunwiddie designed an ultra-efficient modern building with the aspirational, almost nostalgic lines of a lodge. Inside, a gallery with a vaulted beamed ceiling boasts a stone fireplace. Expansive windows frame the landscape and harvest daylight. The building is the photogenic backdrop for weddings, reunions, business events, and memories. The visitor center and the park it serves have quickly become the center of the community.

Silverwood is located in an economically diverse area, notes Stromgren, who used to live very near the park and chaired the St. Anthony Planning Commission: "People in the area were a little pessimistic about the chances of someone coming in and building a really nice park. Things get value-engineered, budgets get cut, and in the end the project never seems to be what it was supposed to be. But here the park and the visitor center are actually better than what people expected. Community members come here to meet friends, stop by the café, go for a walk. This gives them a place." **AMN**

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James J. Hill House (exterior restoration), Saint Paul, MN; Gale Mansion (remodeling/addition), Minneapolis, MN; Soap Factory Historic Structure Report, Minneapolis, MN; Phi Gamma Delta (rehabilitation), Minneapolis, MN; St. Mark's Cathedral (exterior restoration), Minneapolis, MN; Christ Church Lutheran (exterior restoration), Minneapolis, MN; Deep Underground Science and Engineering Lab (DUSEL) (surface building rehabilitation), Lead, SD; Minnesota Department of Transportation Historic Roadside Properties (restoration), Various Locations in Greater MN

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Representative Projects

The Cowles Center for Dance & the Performing Arts (renovation/restoration), Minneapolis, MN; Folwell Hall, University of Minnesota (renovation/restoration), Minneapolis, MN; Beacon Bluff Re-development (renovation/restoration), St. Paul, MN; Beth El Synagogue (renovation), St. Louis Park, MN; Minneapolis Pioneers and Soldiers Cemetery Fence (restoration), Minneapolis, MN; Bemidji Regional Airport Terminal (remodel), Bemidji, MN; Grant County Courthouse (renovation), Elbow Lake, MN; Cedar Rapids Federal Courthouse Adaptive Reuse (renovation), Cedar Rapids, IA

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Representative Projects

Maple Grove Fire Station (renovation/addition), Maple Grove, MN; St. Louis Park MSC (renovation/expansion), St. Louis Park, MN; Knapp House (sandstone restoration); Minnetonka City Hall (various renovation projects), Minnetonka, MN; Washington County Historic Courthouse (ongoing projects), Stillwater, MN; Harkcom House (elevator project); Minnetonka Fire Stations (wall and roof replacement), Minnetonka, MN; United Methodist Church (masonry monitoring project)

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Representative Projects

1885 John Speedy House (LEED certified restoration/renovation/additions), Minneapolis, MN; Lynnhurst UCC Church Sanctuary (restoration/accessibility modifications), Minneapolis, MN; Foley & Mansfield PLLP (renovation/addition to 1918 brick schoolhouse into law offices), Ferndale, MI; Hotel Donaldson (restoration/renovation of 1887 building into boutique hotel, restaurant & bar) - first Renaissance District project in Fargo, ND; Alonso Ward Hotel (restoration/renovation of historic hotel into hotel, event center, retail, restaurant, bar and condominiums), Aberdeen, SD; Millea/Zelle Residence (major remodeling of story and half 1928 home), SW Minneapolis, MN; Anderson Block Building (restoration/renovation of typical two-story Main Street commercial building), Zumbrota, MN; Renovation and Remodeling of numerous homes, Minneapolis, MN

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Representative Projects

Commercial: Roth Distributing, Wolf and Subzero Showroom, Hopkins, MN; Davisco International Corporate Offices, Le Sueur, MN; Twin City Fan Companies, Plymouth, MN; Residential: Cartier Residence (full remodel/renovation), Bear Path in Eden Prairie, MN; Ostrander Residence, Greenwood, MN; Rotman Residence (full renovation), Golden Valley, MN; McNaughton Residence (full renovation), Plymouth, MN; Bergman Residence, Eau Claire, WI

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Firm Principals

Tom Ellison, AIA, CID
Dan Nepp, AIA, CID

TEA2 Architects is an award-winning, 31-year residential firm specializing in additions/renovation, new residences and retreat homes. Our mission is to create distinctive and unique architecture that responds to our clients' goals in meaningful ways, and contributes to an ongoing pursuit of design excellence. We strive for quality design work that incorporates broader values, including historical and neighborhood sensitivity, durability, longevity, and life-affirming qualities in the broader context of sustainability of the building process and our cultural potential.

Representative Projects

Mediterranean Revival Residence (restoration/remodel), Lake of the Isles, Minneapolis, MN; Kenwood Carriage House (renovation), Minneapolis, MN; Comprehensive Addition/Remodel, Harvard IL; Mississippi River Boulevard Residence (addition/remodel), St. Paul, MN; Deephaven Revival (restoration/remodel), Deephaven, MN; Kitchen (remodel), Edina, MN; Front Porch Facelift (renovation/restoration), Minneapolis, MN; Linden Hills Residence (renovation), Minneapolis, MN

LAUREL ULLAND ARCHITECTURE

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Firm Principals

Laurel Ulland, Associate AIA
Kathy Olmstead
Bill Lewis

Laurel Ulland Architecture is an architecture and design firm specializing in residential remodeling, renovation and restoration. LUA has a great appreciation for and an ability to accommodate the distinctive character and quality of older homes with the modern programmatic needs of today's homeowner. LUA is the recipient of 2004 and 2006 Preservation Alliance of Minnesota awards

Representative Projects

Lake of the Isles Dutch Colonial (renovation/addition), Minneapolis, MN; Kenwood Park Italianate (renovation/addition), Minneapolis, MN; Dean Parkway Tudor (renovation/studio addition), Minneapolis, MN; 510 Groveland Co-op (renovation/remodel), Minneapolis; Heather Place (kitchen remodel/addition); St. Paul, MN; Highland Park Tudor (remodel/addition), St. Paul, MN; Macalester-Groveland Bungalow (remodel/renovation), St. Paul, MN; Farmhouse (renovation/kitchen remodel), Prior Lake, MN

WOLD ARCHITECTS AND ENGINEERS

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Firm Principals

Scott McQueen, AIA, LEED AP
Vaughn Dierks, AIA, LEED AP
Michael Cox, AIA
Kevin Marshall, PE, LEED AP
Matt Mooney, PE, LEED AP

Wold Architects and Engineers is committed to developing long-term relationships which focus on exceptional architectural and engineering design and services that meet the needs of our educational clients. We are a full-service firm providing facility analysis, facility planning and programming, architectural design, mechanical and electrical design, space planning, interior design, cost estimating and construction administration to meet our clients' needs.

Representative Projects

Montgomery-Lonsdale High School (addition/renovation), Montgomery, MN; Northport Elementary (renovation/addition), Robbinsdale, MN; Washington County Expansion (renovation), Minnesota National Guard Hastings Armory (renovation), Hastings, MN; Minnesota National Guard Red Wing Armory (renovation), Red Wing, MN; Scott County Transit Center (remodel), Shakopee, MN; Pequot Lakes Middle School/High School (improvements), Pequot Lakes, MN; Hastings Public School Middle School (addition/renovation), Hastings, MN

YUNKER ASSOCIATES ARCHITECTURE

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Contact: Martha Yunker

Firm Principals

Martha Yunker, AIA
Rehn Hassell, AIA
Michael Burgoyne, AIA

We are experts at designing kitchens, master baths, family rooms, additions, residences, business spaces and clubhouses. At Yunker Associates Architecture, renovation is about reconnecting, maximizing potential and leaving clients wandering their new spaces with uncontrollable grins on their faces.

Representative Projects

Hazeltine National Golf Club House, Chaska, MN; Fauth Residence (remodel), Naples, FL; Tennyson Condominium (remodel), Minneapolis, MN; Lundie (renovation), Minneapolis, MN; West Isles Contemporary (remodel), Minneapolis, MN; Mount Curve (kitchen renovation), Minneapolis, MN; Lake of the Isles (kitchen remodel), Minneapolis, MN; Thompson Kenwood (kitchen remodel), Minneapolis, MN

CREDITS

It takes a village to design, engineer, and construct a great building. So let's give credit where credit is due.

Hennepin County Library, Maple Grove

page 20

Location: Maple Grove, Minnesota
Client: Hennepin County
Architect: Meyer, Scherer & Rockcastle, Ltd. (MS&R)
Principal-in-charge: Jeffrey Scherer, FAIA (architecture); Traci Engel Lesneski (interiors)
Project lead designer: Dagmara Larsen
Project manager: Pete Sieger
Project architect: Sean Wagner, AIA
Project team: Nuno Cruz; Sunny Reed; Josh Stowers, AIA
Energy modeling: Karges-Faulconbridge, Inc. (KFI)
Structural and civil engineer: BKBM
Mechanical and electrical engineer: Karges-Faulconbridge, Inc. (KFI)
Lighting design: MS&R
Interior design: MS&R (Traci Engel Lesneski, principal-in-charge; Sunny Reed, interior designer)
General contractor: Adolfson & Peterson Construction
Landscape architect: Damon Farber Associates (Terry Minarik)
Stone: Vetter Stone Company
Cabinetwork and millwork: Heebink Architectural Woodwork
Flooring systems/materials: Absolute Commercial Flooring Inc. (Interface carpet, Farbo linoleum flooring); HiLine Unique Flooring (ECOsurfaces rubber flooring)
Window systems: Empirehouse Inc.
Concrete work: Adolfson & Peterson Construction
Photographer: Lara Swimmer

Hennepin County Library, Plymouth

page 24

Location: Plymouth, Minnesota
Client: Hennepin County Library
Architect: Bentz/Thompson/Rietow, Inc.
Principal architect: Ann Voda, AIA
Project lead designer: Jonathan Strand, AIA
Project team member: Sarah Lehman
Structural engineer: Mattson Macdonald Young
Energy modeling: Engineering Design Initiative
Electrical and mechanical engineer: Engineering Design Initiative
Acoustician: Kvernstoer, Rönnholm & Associates
Landscape architect: Damon Farber Associates
Civil engineer: Sunde Engineering
General contractor: Jorgenson Construction Inc.
Face brick: Hollenback & Nelson Inc.
Access flooring: Bartley Sales Company Inc.
Flooring: Sonus Interiors
Window systems and architectural metal panels: InterClad
Structural steel: Five Star Welding & Fabricating, Inc.; Patriot Erectors, Inc.
Millwork: Aaron Carlson
Green roofing: RAM Restoration & Waterproofing
Waste recycling: Atomic Recycling
Photographer: Philip Prowse

Schaar's Bluff Gathering Center

page 28

Location: Nininger Township, Minnesota
Client: Dakota County Parks
Architect: Meyer, Scherer & Rockcastle, Ltd. (MS&R)
Principal-in-charge: Thomas Meyer, FAIA
Project lead designer: Brendan Sapienza
Project manager: Paul C.N. Mellblom, AIA
Project architects: Sean Wagner, AIA
Structural engineer: Meyer Borgman & Johnson, Inc.
Mechanical and electrical engineer: Michaud Cooley Erickson
Civil engineer: URS

Lighting design: Carla Gallina (design); Michaud Cooley Erickson (calculations)

Interior design: MS&R (Caroline Lundgren; Alana Zbaren)

General contractor: Rochon Corporation

Landscape architect: Close Landscape Architecture+

Landscape project team: Bob Close; Bruce Jacobson; James Robin; Ben Erickson

Flooring systems/materials: concrete

Window systems: H-Windows

Photographers: Andrea Rugg; Pete Sieger

Town Green Band Shell and Pavilions

page 34

Location: Maple Grove, Minnesota
Client: City of Maple Grove
Architect: HGA Architects and Engineers
Principal-in-charge: James Goblirsch, AIA
Project lead designer: Eric Amel, AIA
Project architect: John Cook, FAIA
Project team: Adam Luckhardt, AIA; Andy Weyenberg, AIA; Lauren Lynn
Landscape architect: Damon Farber Associates (Terry Minarik)
Energy modeling: HGA Architects and Engineers
Structural, mechanical, electrical, and civil engineer: HGA Architects and Engineers
Lighting design: Schuler Shook (Paul Whitaker)
Theater consultant: Schuler Shook (Paul Whitaker)
Acoustical consultant: Kvernstoer, Rönnholm & Associates
Audiovisual consultant: AVI-SPL (Doug Buss)
Construction manager: RJM Construction
Concrete contractor: Northland Concrete and Masonry
Concrete supplier: Aggregate Industries
Curtain wall: Inglas, LLP; GlassArt Design, Inc.
Architectural wood composite panels: Parklex Facade; Gladstone Construction, Inc.
Photographer: Paul Crosby

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"I've been keeping an eye on Minneapolis' Peavey Plaza for quite some time, recognizing that it will soon undergo a transformation alongside Orchestra Hall's. Here we see that the stage has been set, with Peavey poised for its next act. Will the concerns of many in the preservation community play out, or will the design transcend them all with unimagined success? Stay tuned." —Photographer Pete Sieger